A

Short Account

OF THE

LIFE AND DEATH

OF

Mrs. Sarah Kilham.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THREE SERMONS,

Preached on the Day She was Interred.

By ALEXANDER KILHAM,
Miniſter of the Goſpel.

For me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain, Phil. i. 21.
Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my laſt End be like his,
Numb. xxiii. 10.

LEEDS:

Printed by BINNS and BROWN;

For the AUTHOR, and ſold by him; alſo by Murgatroyd, Chiſwell-ſtreet, and Wardell, No. 7, Monmouth ſtreet, Weſt-ſtreet, London; Binns, Leeds; Binns, Halifax; Wright, Colepit-Lane, Sheffield; Edwards, Broad-ſtreet, Briſtol; Peat, Temple-ſtreet, Birmingham; Sutton, Bridleſmith-gate, Nottingham; and by the Perſons that diſpoſe of the Monitor, and others, in Plymouth-Dock, Bath, Cheſter, Liverpool, Mancheſter, &c. &c. &c.

[PRICE SIX PENCE.]

[1797.]

50 3/15

THE

LIFE AND DEATH

OF

Mrs. Sarah Kilham, &c.

SHE was born at Pickering, in Yorkſhire, on the 9th Oct. 1756. Her father was Captain of an American merchant ſhip, which prevented him from being much with his family. After eſcaping a number of dangers at ſea, he was ſeized with a fever in one of the American ports, and after languiſhing a few days, he died. As he had long feared the Lord, and walked in the comforts of the Holy Spirit, death had no terrors to his mind. He rejoiced in the hope of the glory of God; and quitted this wilderneſs, to join the anthems of the ſkies. On his being firſt ſeized with the complaint that removed him from this world, he was taken to a gentleman's houſe, who behaved with the greateſt tenderneſs to him, and procured all the medical help the place afforded. And when he was called to his reward, he kindly took care to have him decently buried, without charging any thing to the fatherleſs and widow. He alſo ſecured the property and writings which belonged to the deceaſed; and, after packing every thing into his boxes, he locked and nailed them down, and ſent a very circumſtantial account of what he had done, hoping that none would be ſo wicked as to deprive his relations of the property the boxes contained.

Her mother (who is ſtill living, and making it her ſingle care to be found at death in Chriſt Jeſus) feared and loved

God from her youth, and endeavoured to train up her children in the way that they ſhould go. When it pleaſed God to take away her companion in tribulation, ſhe had many things trying to grapple with. When the ſhip that brought her huſband's boxes returned to Whitby, inſtead of ſending them to her immediately, they were not only opened, but his papers, and every thing that was valuable was taken out of them. This loſs, from a quarter that was little ſuſpected, was keenly felt by the family, and juſtly expoſed the owners of the ſhip to reproach and ſhame. By the kindneſs of friends, and the little help ſhe received from Chelſea hoſpital, ſhe was able to go forward comfortably.

S. Kilham, the ſubject of this narrative, went to live with Mr. Ellart, a reſpectable ſchool-maſter in the town.—They were kind to her; and ſhe endeavoured to return it, by doing every thing in her power to ſerve them. She waited on them by night and by day, when they were paſſing through the valley of the ſhadow of death, and was with them when they bad adieu to the things which are ſeen. Mr. Ellart abundantly rewarded her ſervices to them both, by leaving her the greateſt part of his property after his deceaſe.

My wife being bleſſed with parents that feared and loved God, was early acquainted with the theory of religion; and often found her mind deeply impreſſed with eternal things. Her convictions of the importance of a life devoted to God, were very uſeful: and though ſhe did not for a ſeaſon cloſe in heartily with the offers of mercy, yet they reſtrained her from a number of evils which many fall into.

It pleaſed God to bleſs the miniſtry of Mr. Robinſon, a clergyman of the church of England, to her, in a glorious manner. She was ſo deeply affected with the gracious truths which he delivered, as to give up herſelf unreſervedly to ſeek ſalvation, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant. In the uſe of the means of grace, ſhe found her hope encouraged, and did not ſeek long, before her ſorrow was turned into joy. She had a clear manifeſtation of the love of Chriſt to ſinners, and was enabled to rejoice in the application of ſuitable promiſes to her own mind. She was brought from darkneſs to light, from the power of Satan to God. A conſciouſneſs of acceptance through

through the beloved, and an inheritance with them that are ſanctified, filled her ſoul with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.

Being naturally of a good gentle diſpoſition, ſhe was not eaſily ruffled with the things that diſturb many. And having a lively confidence in the Lord, ſhe was enabled to go on her way comfortably. She had to grapple with many temptations, but found the Lord to ſupport in the trying hour. In the midſt of difficulties, ſhe caſt her care upon the Lord, under a firm perſuaſion, that he cared for her.

She was united with a people that endeavoured ſteadily to promote the glory of God, and each other's ſalvation. By attending upon the means of grace, ſhe found her ſoul to proſper in the divine life. By reading the ſcriptures and other books, ſhe was enabled to ſee what was the will of God in Chriſt Jeſus concerning her. In general, ſhe walked in his fear, and in the comforts of the Holy Spirit.

At the conference, 1787, I was appointed to labour in the Scarborough circuit. We became particularly acquainted with each other in the month of December; and after obtaining liberty from Mr. Weſley, with the hearty conſent of her mother and friends, we were married on Eaſter Monday, 1788. She continued to live in her houſe at Pickering, without being any expence to the connexion, till Auguſt, 1789. The Lord graciouſly helped us through our little difficulties, and cauſed us to rejoice in his ſalvation.

When ſhe was called to paſs through the perils of child-bearing, her mind was carried above fear, and ſhe could chearfully give up herſelf fully, to the great Diſpoſer of all events. The Lord exceeded her hopes, and brought her ſpeedily through her troubles, and bleſſed her with health and peace.

When we removed to Pocklington, we had a very ſmall uncomfortable houſe. The ſituation ſhe had left was a palace in compariſon of it. Yet ſhe found no difficulty in ſubmitting to inconveniences and croſſes, for the ſake of the Lord Jeſus. She took care of her child herſelf, and never thought of having a ſervant to wait on her there. Our circuit was extenſive. We were not above five or ſix nights, in ſix weeks at home, in the regular courſe of the circuit.—And the extra-days we ſpent with our families, were few

in compariſon of many circuits, and without any allowance for them. But we had many ſincere followers of the Lord Jeſus to converſe with, and experienced many mercies in our various engagements. In ſome places the work of the Lord revived. We beheld with pleaſure, ſinners converted from the error of their ways.

As I was not raiſed to the office of an aſſiſtant, though moſt of the circuit deſired our ſtay, we were obliged to remove the next Auguſt, to Whitby.

We met with a kind and loving people in that circuit, and found a great deal of ſatisfaction in the ſervice of God. Many were the mercies beſtowed upon us in that place. It pleaſed God to help my dear partner to paſs a ſecond time, through the pains of child-bearing, without receiving any harm. Root and branch were ſpared for a ſeaſon. She found her mind refreſhed in the religion of Jeſus, and filled up her place in the church and in the family, to the glory of God, and the honour of the connexion.

When the news reached us, that Mr. Weſley was dead, perſons of different perſuaſions were agitated. Different opinions prevailed reſpecting the future government of our cauſe. As the leading men of the Whitby ſociety were anxious to have all things as they had been from the beginning, they appeared exceedingly jealous leſt any innovations ſhould take place. Our aſſiſtant was exactly of the ſame diſpoſition. A diſtrict meeting was held for the aſſiſtants of ſeveral circuits. Other *preachers*, though in full connexion, were not invited to it. We heard nothing of what paſſed, but what the aſſiſtant pleaſed to communicate. As he, and ſeveral of the friends knew my ſentiments, they wiſhed to prevent me from going to the conference, but all their efforts were ineffectual.

My wife adviſed and counſelled on the occaſion. She ſaw the ſchemes of the leading men, and wiſhed I would attend, to ſee what was tranſacted, if I could be of no other ſervice to the connexion.

Not being as yet in the office of aſſiſtant, we were obliged, with our two children, after ſtaying one year, to remove to Newcaſtle-upon-Tyne. If the voice of the people could have been heard, we ſhould have had the privilege of ſtaying a ſecond year. The Lord gave journeying mercies by land and by water. We were brought in ſafety and peace among a number of ſenſible ſteady friends. We had not been

been many months in Newcaſtle, before the Lord called us to part with our dear little boy. My wife felt much on the occaſion, but did not murmur at the diſpenſations of the Almighty. She freely offered the child to the Lord, and when he was called to Abraham's boſom, ſhe could ſay, "Good is the will of the Lord."

When the contention took place about the ſacrament, ſhe never was backward to adviſe me to purſue what I thought to be right in the ſight of God. And ſhe never attempted to hinder me from ſtanding up in defence of what I believed was for the welfare of his cauſe. It was her delight to help me in every thing. She took a pleaſure in endeavouring to bear part of my croſs.

After I had received a ſummons to attend the London conference in 1792, though ſhe was within nine weeks of being delivered, ſhe urged me to go, not fearing the face of any adverſary. And when I was in London, before my trial commenced, ſhe wrote to me as follows:

"I am truly thankful to God, for his particular providence manifeſted in thy behalf. I bleſs the Lord, I have no diſtreſs of mind about any thing. I hope I am, and ſhall be prepared, to follow the divine leadings of providence in all things. Should thou be brought through with honour to the cauſe, and peace and bleſſing to thy own mind, the praiſe ſhall be given to him, to whom praiſe is due. If not, we will take it as a part of the cup ordered by the Lord, and drink it accordingly. Let not thy mind be troubled in any-wiſe on my account. I find myſelf perfectly free and reſigned. I hope the Lord will enable me at all times, inſtead of being a burden, joyfully to bear a part of thine. I pray for the proſperity of the truth, and that the Lord would more abundantly bleſs his own church and people every where."

When none of the preachers were willing to go to Aberdeen, I offered to ſupply that place, provided they would allow me to ſtay in Newcaſtle, till my wife ſhould recover from child-bearing, and be able to bear the fatigues of the journey. To this the preachers readily conſented. She chearfully agreed to the appointment, and after having laid-in ſeven weeks, in the month of Oct. 1792, undertook a journey of 228 miles, to ſerve the cauſe of our glorious Immanuel. She was very ſick in the journey, but bore it with pleaſure, to promote the glory of God.

Every

Every thing appeared ſtrange to us on on our firſt going into Scotland. But the kindneſs of the people, and the privileges we enjoyed, more than compenſated, for every difficulty we were called to encounter. My wife ſoon found her mind perfectly reconciled to the place, and thankful to God, for bringing us into ſuch a peaceable ſituation. She endeavoured to ſhew her love to God and his cauſe, by filling up her place, in the church and her family, to his glory.

After we had ſpent about ten months in Aberdeen, it pleaſed God to call our ſecond Samuel to himſelf. He died of the meaſles. This was a very trying ſcene to us both. We endeavoured to offer him to God, as we had done the child that died in Newcaſtle, and found power to give him freely, to the Giver of all our mercies. Before his death, we were enabled to ſay from our hearts, "Thy will be done." It is probable, however, that the fatigue ſhe had during the child's affliction and death, with what ſhe felt in her mind on account of his removal, laid the foundation of a nervous diſorder, which in the end, called her to join her friends and children, to ſing the anthems of the ſkies.

Soon after we had buried our little one, ſhe wrote to me at Inverneſs, as follows:—"I received thine with a thankful heart, praiſing God for his mercy and loving-kindneſs, in preſerving thee from danger, and for feeding thy ſoul with the bread of eternal life. His mercies are new every morning, they are repeated every moment. I have been much in the ſpirit of prayer ſince thou left home. Well may we ſay, there is no God, like our God. We know, if we be faithful, his preſence will follow us through this wilderneſs, and bring us ſafe to the promiſed land. More holineſs of heart, and devotedneſs to God is what we want. It is my grief and ſhame that I love the Lord ſo little, when he hath done ſuch great things for me and mine. Oh! that this might be the laſt time I have to complain of myſelf."—In another letter ſhe ſaid,—"The Lord is good. He will with-hold nothing from us, that is for our happineſs and his glory. I hope that God, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, will more abundantly bleſs and water thy ſoul, and give a more abundant entrance into the myſteries of the goſpel, that thou ma,eſt be able to feed the ſheep of Chriſt, with food convenient for them; and that he would make thee

thee more and more uſeful in bringing back thoſe who are wandering in the paths of error, to his fold again. I find my happineſs is ſo cloſely connected with thine, that I muſt always rejoice or mourn with thee.

"Surely the Lord delights to do his needy creatures good. I find myſelf deeply intereſted in every exerciſe thou haſt to paſs through. Before thou left home, I never found my heart more deeply engaged with God for a bleſſing on thy labours; and in thy abſence I have been enabled to plead much with the Lord Jeſus in thy behalf. I have found great brokenneſs of heart before him. My poor petitions have in a great meaſure been anſwered. I will not be diſcouraged to plead ſtill with the Lord for a bleſſing on all thy ſacred engagements. I have a good hope through grace, that the Lord will ſtill ſtand by, and more abundantly bleſs and ſanctify thee, for the great work thou haſt undertaken, to thy preſent and eternal good, and the advantage of the people among whom thou art called to labour. Then doubt not, but be ſtrong in the mighty God of Jacob. He can change the cold regions of the north, into a fruitful field, and the moſt deſolate place, into ſprings of water. Oh! that I could love him with a perfect heart, fervently, and *never, never,* grieve him more. Believe me, what I have written here, is not ſtudied, but the effuſions of a heart filled with gratitude to the beſt of beings, for ſuch unbounded goodneſs to his unworthy ſervant.

"There is nothing would reconcile me to part with thee in the way I do, but the great and glorious cauſe thou art engaged in: And I rejoice that I am accounted worthy to ſhare a part of the croſs with thee. I would ſay much more, but language fails to expreſs what I feel in my breaſt at this ſolemn moment. God bleſs thee, and keep thee near himſelf for ever. AMEN."

She was often poorly at the latter end of the year 1793, and was frequently a good deal affected with her nervous complaint. She was conſiderably diſtreſſed, after ſhe had had a miſcarriage. For ſeveral weeks ſhe felt the effects of not being ſufficiently careful after it happened. We had the help of one of the beſt phyſicians in Aberdeen. He did every thing in his power to remove the complaint, and was inſtrumental in the hands of God, of doing her good. In the midſt of weakneſs and pain, her ſoul was very comfortable.

ſortable. She rejoiced much in the Lord Jehovah, and was enabled to look death in the face without terror.

In the courſe of the ſpring, 1794, ſhe was variouſly exerciſed. Sometimes ſhe appeared in tolerable health, and good ſpirits. But had many returns of her nervous complaint. She frequently thought that her affliction was unto death, and greatly wiſhed to reſt near her dear little boy, if the Lord ſhould call her to himſelf. This led her to wiſh, that the conference would allow us to comply with the deſire of Aberdeen friends, and ſtay a third year among them. She was very poorly in June, but urged me to go to the conference, as I had ſome affairs to ſettle in England, and was appointed the delegate for the different circuits in Scotland. Mr. Mather warmly oppoſed my ſtaying a third year, in the meeting of the delegates. He complained it was a bad precedent, and might be attended with injury to the connexion, if ſuch meaſures were countenanced. Yet this good man had come to Briſtol from his third year of travelling in Hull circuit, and is now on his third year in Mancheſter. When I informed the delegates of the ſtate of my wife's health, moſt of them heartily conſented for me to go a third year to Aberdeen.

While I was in Briſtol, my wife wrote to me as follows: "I rejoice and am thankful to the Lord for all his mercies. I pray that they may be ſanctified to us both to all eternity. My health is much reſtored. My ſtrength and ſpirits have greatly returned. I am almoſt a wonder to myſelf. The Lord hath not forſaken us in the darkeſt hour. If we live to him, he will ſet our feet upon the rock of ages, and bring us to enjoy peace and liberty for his name's ſake.—I feel nothing but good-will to all mankind. I am enabled to pray daily for the happineſs and ſalvation of all. I am a great debtor—the Lord has forgiven me much; ought I not therefore to forgive my fellow-creatures? Yes, I do freely from my heart, and pray that they may be reſtored. Stay the time of thy appointment in Briſtol, and be happy. Come the beſt way that offers, not thinking of us, we will wait patiently the appointed time."

Her complaints frequently returned, and were generally attended with a great depreſſion of ſpirit. A ſecond miſcarriage ſhe was called to endure, ſoon after my return from the conference. She had been a good deal better before it happened, and was hoping that the Lord would graciouſly

graciouſly reſtore her to her wonted ſtate of health. But in the midſt of her trouble ſhe thought death was at hand, and frequently mentioned her apprehenſions on that head. Her mind was particularly happy. She rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. When it pleaſed the Lord to remove her complaints in a meaſure, and gave her health to go through the duties of the family, ſhe was thankful, and took a ſingular pleaſure in making us as comfortable as poſſible.

The Briſtol diſpute occaſioned war through the connexion. She never checked me in the letters which I wrote on the occaſion, but helped me to the utmoſt of her power.

We were particularly adviſed to remove to England at the conference in July, 1795, on account of her health.—The Doctor thought that a change of air would be ſerviceable, and might be attended with great advantages. She left herſelf entirely in the hands of the Lord, determining to caſt all her care upon him, knowing that he cared for her.

As I was appointed delegate for the North of Scotland, it was neceſſary to go earlier to Mancheſter, than I ſhould have gone, had I been differently ſituated. We heard of the many threatenings Mr. Mather made uſe of, on account of the letter I had circulated, ſigned Martin Luther.——From other quarters we had many ſevere epiſtles. But none of theſe things moved us. We were enabled to look through all to God.

When I was on my way to the conference, my wife wrote as follows :—" I hope the Lord will give ſtrength and journeying mercies, and make thy way proſperous.—The Lord does hear our united prayers, and will ſuffer nothing to befal us but what is for our good, and his glory. When I am ready to be caſt down on account of thy fatigues and exerciſes, the promiſes of an unchangeable God revive my ſpirit, and make me aſhamed of my weakneſs. I cannot, I dare not doubt his faithfulneſs. O Lord ! help me to be as clay in thy hands, and to leave my burden at thy feet !

" I am this day witneſs, he is ever nigh to them that call upon him in truth. He might juſtly have been deaf to the prayers of ſuch a poor, faithleſs, unworthy creature as I am; yet ſo tender and compaſſionate has the friend of ſinners been, that he has not only ſupported, but abundantly

ly comforted in thy abſence. I am enabled this day to caſt my burden on the Lord, with all my cares and fears.—My health and ſtrength increaſes. For this bleſſing I deſire to be thankful, and in the ſtrength of the Lord to live to him. The name of Jeſus is precious to my ſoul, and his love to me and mine is great indeed. We have been kept to this moment as in the hollow of his hand, from the ten thouſand ills that croud around us by night and by day.

" After thou hadſt left Aberdeen, many of the friends came to ſee us. They were very much affected. Sorrowing and weeping for the loſs of their miniſter. They were to me like Job's friends; yet I found a ſecret pleaſure in mingling my tears with their's. Very many of the people declare, they have received more real good to their ſouls in thy laſt year's miniſtry, than in both the former. May the Lord be as a wall of fire round about thee, and cauſe thy path to ſhine more and more to the perfect day: and increaſe thy uſefulneſs in his church continually!

" It has been a trying circumſtance to me to be ſo far ſeparated the two laſt years on thy birth-day. I ſhould have thought myſelf happy to have mingled my praiſes with thine. Yet I rejoice and praiſe the Lord for ſparing thee till now. I ſee myſelf unworthy of this favour, and other bleſſings, which I cannot number. O may the Lord add to the days of thy life many happy years! May thy peace and uſefulneſs be like a river, and thy righteouſneſs like the waves of the ſea! That at laſt, when thy head is ſilvered over with a good old age, thou mayeſt ſay with the great apoſtle, " I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, &c."

The following extract is from a letter I received from her in Mancheſter.—" Ever ſince thou left us, I have had ſuch gracious viſits from the Holy Spirit, when I have been in ſecret, engaged with the Lord in thy behalf, that my ſoul has been loſt in wonder, love, and praiſe. I have been ready to cry out, Lord, what am I, or what is my father's houſe, that thou ſhouldeſt thus bleſs me? Thou can'ſt not tell how good the Lord has been to me, and is at this moment. My fears have been diſpelled like the morning clouds.

" When I read thy letter, I plainly perceived, that the hearts of men, are in the hands of the Lord, to be turned whither-

whitherſoever he will. He can cauſe the wrath of man to praiſe him. Glory be to his great name for ever! For my own part I ſtand aſtoniſhed at the goodneſs and loving kindneſs of God to us. He is better to us than our fears. His favour is better than life. If ever I gave myſelf and my all into his hands, it has been at this period.

"When I reflect on the ways of providence, I feel my ſoul humbled in the duſt. I ſincerely thank the friends for their kindneſs in remembering me at ſuch a diſtance, and in appointing a ſituation that may be favourable to my health. My mind was perfectly reconciled to abide in any part in Scotland. But ſince providence has led the way, I am perfectly free to go. I cannot tell how it is, but I am ſure my heart will be ſorrowful at leaving this kingdom. I love the ſouls of the people. May ſuch men be ſent as will be a bleſſing to the circuit! I hope the Lord will give me, and the child ſtrength to proſecute the journey. May the wiſdom of the ſerpent, and the innocency of the dove, always be found in thee, and in all the ſtandard-bearers of the Lord Jeſus! May the bleſſing of Jacob's God be with thee, to protect and comfort thee in all thy undertakings! I endeavour to give thee up chearfully to him who watches over us to do us good, and without whoſe knowledge a ſparrow cannot fall. Accept of my thanks for thy kind remembrance of us. It was more than I could have deſired after the labours of the ſabbath. May the Lord of the vineyard repay thee a thouſand-fold into thy own boſom! I long much to ſee thee, but not with impatience. I only wiſh I could bear a part of all thy toils. I ſee myſelf of little worth. No better than a cypher. A cumberer of the ground. Lord help me. Adieu."

By the advice of the doctor, ſhe embraced an opportunity of coming to Shields by ſea. The voyage was very ſerviceable. When we reached Alnwick, ſhe was conſiderably better than ſhe had been in Scotland. The ſituation was agreeable, and every thing appeared to be favourable, in regard to her health. For ſeveral weeks ſhe had no returns of her nervous complaint, but was able to purſue her affairs with thankfulneſs. And when her affliction returned, it was not ſo violent as formerly.

After I had publiſhed the Progreſs of Liberty, and found an hoſt of foes raiſed up againſt me, ſhe exhorted me frequently to follow the convictions of my own mind, and the

openings of divine providence, not in the leaſt fearing the conſequences. She has often profeſſed a willingneſs to live in the meaneſt ſituation, rather than I ſhould be afraid of declaring my mind freely to the preachers. When the London Bull was received, that required my trial and expulſion, at the diſtrict meeting, ſhe ſtrengthened my hands in God. The abuſive inſulting letters we received from many quarters, together with the provoking language made uſe of by ſeveral in Alnwick circuit, only moved her to be more earneſt at the throne of grace, and more reſolved to be fully and for ever the Lord's. When the diſtrict meeting was ended, and we were continued in the circuit, it ſeemed her conſtant care, to get her mind prepared for all the events of providence. When her nervous complaints returned, ſhe often found her mind very comfortable, and rejoiced in the God of her ſalvation. If her ſpirits were depreſſed, ſhe always found relief in the religion of Jeſus. She placed death frequently before her, and had divine impreſſions upon her mind, in meditations upon it.

On the laſt day of April ſhe wrote to me as follows :— "I am a little poorly. The woman in Bond-gate is dead. What need to be ready! To have our lamps burning, and oil in our veſſels, that we may meet death as a welcome meſſenger! My heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord, that he will be to us a father, and direct all our future ſteps. Thy happineſs lies near my heart. My chief conſolation when thou art abſent is to bear thee on my heart before the Lord, that all thy wants may be abundantly ſupplied: that thou mayeſt be ſtrong in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of thy ſalvation. May the power of the higheſt overſhadow thee by night and by day, and give thee once more to return to us in ſafety and peace!"

When we were engaged in different exerciſes, ſhe always found a number of promiſes bearing up her ſpirit above fear. She often ſtood amazed at the conſolation which the Redeemer communicated by his word, and was led to rejoice in thoſe things which otherwiſe would have been too ſtrong for her. She went round part of the circuit with me, and was greatly ſatisfied with the kindneſs of friends. They conſidered her as placed in a trying ſituation, and encouraged her to hope in the Lord for the ſupport of his Spirit. Many of the friends rejoiced to ſee her ſupported above fear. And to hear her declare her

confidence in the Lord, reſpecting the trials which we were called to paſs through. When I left Alnwick to go to the conference, ſhe accompanied me to the extremity of the circuit, and had the misfortune to be thrown from the horſe, which confined her in the houſe for ſeveral weeks. I was obliged to proſecute my journey towards London, while ſhe was a priſoner, expoſed to a number of reflections.

On my way to the conference, ſhe wrote to me as follows:—"Under the protection of a good and gracious providence, I and my dear Sally got ſafe home laſt night O that the Lord would enable me at all times to conduct myſelf in ſuch a way and manner, that none may have cauſe to reproach religion on my account! I hope the Lord will enable me in ſome meaſure to bear up thy hands by faith and prayer. At preſent I find my mind willing to ſubmit to the loweſt ſtation in life, if I may be of any ſervice to thee, or in any meaſure help to ſmooth its rugged path. The Lord he is God, we will rejoice and be glad in him. May the God of peace bleſs thee, and make thy way plain!"

When I was in London, ſhe wrote as follows: "My ſpirits were a good deal revived and comforted, when I read of the friendly and kind treatment thou haſt met with from different perſons in thy journey. I hope the Lord will reward them double for every kindneſs they have rendered thee. I have no doubt that friends will be raiſed up as thy wants require, and thy mind kept above the fear of man. And ſhould thou be forſaken of all, the Lord will be the ſtrength of thy heart, and thy portion for ever.

"I am ſtill a priſoner in the houſe. My foot continues lame. I find myſelf very weary with ſitting ſo long, and my mind ſometimes a little low. I hope the Lord will give me in patience to poſſeſs my ſoul, and wait the time when ſtrength will be given. If I could bear more of thy burthen for thee than I do, my heart would rejoice, even mine. None under heaven can be more willing to help, though many are more able. May the Lord bleſs, and ſend thee help from heaven!"

When ſhe heard of my expulſion, and the triumph of a few individuals on account of the printed falſehoods circulated on the day I was expelled, ſhe wrote to me as

follows:—" Language fails to tell thee of the diſtreſſing time we have had to paſs through. When the printed letter came, the ſhouts of victory were heard through the ſtreets by our oppoſers. I had many friends uniting to comfort me: others, that before appeared friendly, were rejoicing at what they ſuppoſed to be our downfal. In the midſt of theſe deep waters, the Lord has kept me from ſinking. His bleſſed word has been my ſupport and my ſtay. I will hope that theſe dark clouds will paſs away, and the dawn of better days will appear.

" Do not, my dear, be unhappy about us. I am willing to go any where. As ſoon as we can find a ſuitable place, a little room or two, with peace, will make me happy. May the Lord be ever preſent with thee, and lead thee into the paths of truth and peace; and deliver thee out of the hands of thy formidable enemies, for they are many! I recommend thee to his gracious protection, for he careth for thee."

On the 4th of Auguſt ſhe wrote to a worthy friend as follows:—" I have the moſt grateful ſenſe of your kindneſs, and the kindneſs of your family, as manifeſted heretofore to me and mine. I ſhould think myſelf greatly wanting in my duty, were I not to return you my ſincere thanks for your kindneſs, in inviting me and my dear child to your hoſpitable home. I have the deepeſt ſenſe of your goodneſs to us in this moſt trying ſeaſon. I have been ſurrounded with clouds and darkneſs for a ſeaſon.—But deſire to praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, in ſupporting me far beyond my expectation. Truly he has been better to me than my fears. My mind is a little relieved, and I am hoping with humble ſubmiſſion to the divine will, to ſee better days. There is but one thing I am at preſent careful for, that is, the injury my dear huſband is likely to ſuſtain in his character, unleſs he will be able in a good meaſure to wipe off the various ſlanders his enemies have laid upon him. I hope I can be happy with any ſituation the providence of God may point out for us. The ſmile of heaven will bring peace into the meaneſt cottage."

As I had to ſtay in Nottingham to print my account of of the trial, it prevented me from going to Sunderland, till the latter end of Auguſt. She wrote ſeveral times before we met, and encouraged me not to fear. The God of Jacob being on our ſide, we had a right to expect an accompliſhment

compliſhment of his promiſes; and ſhe was fully perſuaded, he would richly provide for us in every place. The conference turning me out, without giving us any help, did not affect her. She was conſcious, the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh, would amply ſupply our wants by Chriſt Jeſus. When we met in Sunderland, ſhe was very comfortable in her mind, and ſeemed to be quite ſatisfied with the diſpenſations of providence. She ſpent a few days with her mother and friends at Pickering, in our way to Leeds. She found her mind happy, in having another opportunity of meeting them again in the land of the living. When we were in Leeds, the Lord greatly bleſſed her in the hoſpitable family where our lot was caſt. She found a thankful heart for the mercies conferred upon us in that place. It gave her great ſatisfaction to have an opportunity of converſing freely, with ſeveral perſons who had a bleſſed experience of the things which made for their peace. When we removed to Salford, ſhe found her heart exceedingly comforted in the bleſſings of the goſpel, and in the kindneſs of a number of friends. While ſhe was there, ſhe begun a letter to a friend whom ſhe exceedingly reſpected, but was never able to finiſh it. In that letter ſhe ſays, "I would not willingly give a moment's pain to an indifferent perſon, much leſs my friend. When I conſider the paternal care of your heavenly father toward you, I am truly thankful. I think I ſee my dear friend hid as under the hollow of his hand, ſcreened from a thouſand ills that ſwarm around. Yet trials of faith and patience await you, and all Zion's travellers. May you ever come out of the furnace as gold purified! He will be with you in it, and bring you through with ſhouts of victory. And when this tranſcient fluctuating ſcene of life is ended, you will be tranſplanted where no rude blaſts ſhall enter, and pain and ſickneſs be for ever baniſhed. O my dear friend! what have you or I to fear, if our intereſt be in the Maſter of the ſtorm? Our little bark will glide ſafely through life's tempeſtuous ſea, and, at laſt, anchor ſafe in the deſired haven.

"When I begun this letter, I had no idea of cloſing it in this place. I think we are like birds of paſſage, our flight is ſo rapid, and pointing towards the mild regions of the ſouth, before the keen north wind has its commiſſion to ſtrip the foreſts of their verdure, or the magazines of ſnow

and froſt be iſſued forth, to make deſolate the face of nature.

" After an abſence of ſix years (in Pickering) I ſought out many of my acquaintance. Some I found, and others were laid in the ſilent grave, cut off in the midſt of their days; while I, an unfruitful branch, am ſpared in mercy. I hear a voice ſaying, " Give me thy heart:" be ready to meet thy friends in a better world above, where pain and parting ſhall be no more. O my dear friend, what is it keeps me back from a fuller enjoyment of God? The language of my heart is, Lord, I would be thine, in thine own way, only give me thy love, and enable me to give thee my whole heart. I ſee every thing around me as unſtable as water. I know myſelf a ſtranger and pilgrim, that hath no certain dwelling-place. I am travelling to the grave, as faſt as time can carry me: and, after all, I am conſcious my affections are not crucified, to the world, as they ought to be. I do not bring that glory to God that I might do. O that the Lord would pardon my ſins of omiſſion, for they are many! I wiſh to do all with a ſingle eye to the glory of God, and conduct myſelf with greater ſimplicity of heart before him. I am here in the midſt of the methodiſtical war. Yet, I bleſs God, I am enabled to ſit calm on tumult's wheel. Mr. M——r is raiſing all his forces to prevent my huſband's preaching, not only in their own chapels, but in the Diſſenters. All he can do avails little. The greateſt want I feel is, to keep my mind humble and free from prejudice; more conformity to the divine will; more deadneſs to the world; and, a watchful and praying ſpirit. I feel poor in the midſt of the richeſt offers of the goſpel. May our mutual prayers reach the compaſſionate ear of the Lord Jeſus, that he may deſtroy every unholy plant, and reign in our hearts without a rival. May the Lord bleſs you with health, that you may enjoy the bleſſings of his providence; but, if a delicate frame be your lot, the Lord will even bleſs this unto you. May you ever have to ſay, " Good is the will of the Lord."

She felt a good deal of pain in her head after we had been a few days in Manchester. This was a complaint ſhe had never been troubled with in her former afflictions. The day I went to Cheſter, ſhe was ſeized with a violent pain in the left ſide of her head, accompanied with ſickneſs at her

her ſtomach. The laſt letter I received from her, was in Liverpool, dated 16th November, 1796. The following is an extract from it: "I have juſt received thy kind letter. Be aſſured it is a great trial that I cannot comply with thy kind requeſt, and that of the friends. It has been, ever will be the pleaſure of my life, in the ſmalleſt degree, to add to thy happineſs. But the Lord has laid his afflicting hand upon me, therefore, I moſt gladly ſubmit. I have not experienced ſuch pain and ſickneſs for many years. I bleſs God for this chaſtiſement; he hath in judgment remembered mercy, and given a bleſſing to the means made uſe of. I am much relieved, but far from being fit for any place but my room. Don't be unhappy, but be very thankful. I want for nothing. Go on in the ſtrength of the Lord, in the face of thine adverſaries. Fear not. Do all the good thou canſt while it is called to-day. Don't come home a day before the appointed time, on my account, unleſs quite convenient. Take all neceſſary care of thy health. It is a valuable bleſſing. May the Lord direct thy ſteps, by the light of his Spirit, and ſupport thy mind in every emergency."

The following is an extract from a letter ſhe had begun to me, but never could finiſh.—"It is one great privilege of the children of God, that they can hold a ſweet communion together in ſpirit, when abſent in body. It is a heart reviving thought, when I conſider, the time is haſtening in which we ſhall enjoy unbounded happineſs, in being united in the cloſeſt ſpiritual union with our gracious Lord, and ſee each other's face to all eternity. My ſoul rejoices in hope of that day, when without any interruption we ſhall "range the fields of light, and climb the mount of joy." Oh! that thy ſoul may be filled with love, as thy life has been with labours! Then late, very late, may thou receive a full reward, and "enter into the joy of thy Lord." There, though lower far my place, I hope to meet, and as a leſſer ſtar, glorify our common Lord.

"To be happy, is a deſirable ſtate, and that every man may have if he pleaſes. He that is not content in any ſtate, will be content in no ſtate; for the fault is not in the thing, but in the mind. I wiſh to wear a thread-bare coat with as much ſatisfaction, as if it were freſh and made of the fineſt wool. I never heard of an imperial crown that cured the headach, or a golden ſlipper the gout. I wiſh never to be troubled

for

for what I have not, but to rejoice for what I have. An inward peace of mind does more than compenſate for the want of outward felicity.

" If what I have written be acceptable to thee, my heart ſhall rejoice."

When I returned from Liverpool, ſhe was exceedingly diſtreſſed with pain and ſickneſs. All the help we could procure from the ſkill of the phyſician, and the power of medicine, could not afford her relief. I often left her for a few days to preach in different places. But when I returned from Sheffield, on the 17th of January, 1797, ſhe deſired I would not leave her again, unleſs it were for a few hours.

While we were in Salford, Mr. and Mrs. Heamer did every thing in their power to help. They rejoiced to adminiſter any thing they could impart, to be of ſervice to her. They were exceedingly deſirous that ſhe might recover, and uſed all their influence to remove her complaints, or to leſſen her troubles. But all their efforts, united to thoſe of the phyſician, were ineffectual.

We removed to Red-Hall on the 18th, where every kindneſs was ſhewn that our friends there could adminiſter; and on the 22d, to Aſhton. We were kindly entertained at the houſe of a friend, for two nights, but when we could proceed no farther towards Leeds, we removed to Mr. Wm. Heginbottom's, where we continued till ſhe was no more.

Freſh means were uſed by a very reſpectable apothecary, but though he varied his application, and did every thing in his power to remove her complaints, yet the diſorder was too deeply rooted, to be removed by human power. The violent pain continued in her head till the laſt. And her ſtomach was ſo very much diſordered, that it would digeſt nothing. The laſt five weeks of her life, ſhe appeared to live almoſt by miracle. Every perſon that ſaw her was amazed how ſhe could continue, when ſhe received no kind of food. A few days before her death, ſhe was ſeized with a fever, which affected her mind. She was a little deranged. But her converſation was only childiſh. She never expreſſed any thing in that period, that was in the leaſt offenſive. The three laſt days of her life, ſhe had a ſore conflict with pain and death. She appeared ſenſible, but could not ſpeak. About half an hour before ſhe died, ſhe did not breathe ſo hard, but gradually declined, till ſhe gently glided

glided out of life, without a ſigh, about half paſt eight o'clock in the morning, on the 23d of February, in the 41ſt year of her age.

Before ſhe was ſeized with this affliction, ſhe found her ſoul exceedingly happy. She wondered at the kindneſs and mercy of God vouchſafed in Chriſt Jeſus. She ſpoke to me of the great joy ſhe felt in her mind, and was led to ſuppoſe, ſome ſevere trial was at hand. Her mind was greatly bleſſed in the Redeemer through the whole of her affliction. She ſoon was perſuaded that her departure was at hand, and ſpoke to me of her little affairs, that ſhe might have nothing to do but to meet the Lord Jeſus, whenever her ſoul ſhould be required. She bore up beneath her extreme pain with great patience, and never murmured at the diſpenſations of providence to her. She often encouraged me to truſt in the Lord, and fear the face of no evil. To ſacrifice every thing rather than ſtain my conſcience with guilt. Whatever trials I might meet with, ſhe was aſſured the Lord would help me to bear them to his glory, and my own advantage. She exhorted me to continue my efforts to promote the welfare of the connexion, by ſeeking a redreſs of the grievances which have crept among us, let the conſequences be what they might. Whenever there was any appearance of her troubles being removed, ſhe ſtill thought they would continue, till ſhe had done with the things that are ſeen.

She often was greatly afraid, leſt ſhe ſhould give way to murmuring or repining in her trouble. She frequently intreated the Lord to proportion her ſtrength according to her day. She begged for us to plead with God, that ſhe might poſſeſs her ſoul in patience continually. She frequently aſked me what ſhe ſhould do, and begged I would repeat ſome promiſes from the ſcriptures, ſuitable to her ſtate, as her memory was much impared. It appeared her mind was a good deal refreſhed by them. She was led to hope that the Lord would never leave or forſake her.—About three weeks before her departure, ſhe thought death was at hand, and longed to be diſſolved, to be with Chriſt. When ſhe could hardly ſpeak, ſhe ſaid, how fain would I have

> "Clap'd my glad wings, and ſor'd away,
> And mingled with the blaze of day."

She

She thought ſhe was juſt entering into the joy of her Lord, when the young woman that ſat up with her, took her by the hand, and as ſhe imagined, prevented her.—— She ſpoke a good deal on ſpiritual things to ſeveral that were with her, and afterwards told me how happy her ſoul was, while ſhe was ſpeaking to them.

When the diſorder deprived her of her reaſon, ſhe was quite childiſh. Her mind was much taken up with thoughts of being with her mother and friends. She wanted a number of things, as perſons generally do that are in ſuch a ſtate. Yet, even then, ſhe was glad when we prayed with her, and, and never ſaid any thing contrary to the religion of Jeſus. I ſpoke a good deal to her on the Sunday morning before ſhe died. Her mind was comfortable, and ſhe was ſtill deſirous of being releaſed from the miſeries of life. The pain continued very intenſe till the Thurſday morning, when ſhe was glorioufly releaſed from all her ſufferings. She appeared ſenſible when ſhe could not ſpeak, and knew when we prayed with her: ſhe continued looking upward as though all her ſoul was engaged above, till ſhe breathed her laſt. She lived and died in the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

The evening after her death, I preached, with many tears, to a number of attentive hearers, according to a former appointment. On Saturday evening I ſpoke again, not far from Aſhton. On Sunday morning, from the paſſage at the head of the firſt ſermon annexed to this account. About twelve o'clock a vaſt number of friends met together, from Mancheſter, Rochdale, Middleton, Oldham, Redhall, Moſley, and all the places near, to attend the funeral. About one o'clock, upwards of 1000 perſons joined in ſinging her remains to the church. As ſoon as the ceremony was ended, we went to the chapel. But there was ſuch a croud of people, that we could not get into it for a ſeaſon. I firſt attempted to ſtand on a bench near the door, that the people might hear in the yard and in the houſe; but I was obliged to go into the pulpit at laſt, and the houſe was wedged with hearers, as I never ſaw a place before. Many however could not hear. They were obliged to go away. Both in the morning and at that hour, we mingled our tears and our worſhip before God. The prayers of the people, and their bleſſing

bleſſing attended us all the day. That evening I preached in Moſley to a large congregation. We felt the ſoftening power of divine grace, and mutually rejoiced in the God of our ſalvation. Upwards of a hundred friends from Aſhton accompanied us thither, and returned to their families, ſinging the praiſes of God, as they journeyed by the way.

It was the ſolemneſt day of my life. My tears were my meat, in the ſenſe David wiſhed that paſſage to be underſtood. The mercy of God, the kindneſs of friends, the loſs of my dear partner, my own unworthineſs, and a thouſand other things, melted me into tenderneſs before all. Yet the Lord helped me to ſpeak three times to the people. To his name be glory and praiſe for ever.

Our ſituation was providential. Every kindneſs that mortals could ſhow, had been manifeſted to us in Salford, by Mr. and Mrs. Heamer, and a few of the friends.—— We had all the help that a reſpectable phyſician and apothecary could adminiſter. The latter exerted himſelf beyond meaſure to be of ſervice. When no relief could be obtained there, it ſeemed neceſſary to try a more open air. No place under heaven could have been found more agreeable than Aſhton. Mr. W. Heginbottom and his dear partner, opened their door to receive us, whether the afflicted ſhould live or die. And the ſix weeks we were with them, they took a ſingular pleaſure in waiting on us by night and by day. When the friends would not allow me to attend her by night as well as by day, any longer, for fear of injuring my own health (as I preached ſeven or eight times in the week, beſides walking ſeveral miles) upwards of forty women offered to ſit up with her. The laſt three weeks ſhe lived, two of the friends came generally every night, and were unwearied in attending upon her. They ſeemed anxious to be of ſervice to us, in our diſtreſs. And when it pleaſed God to releaſe her, it is impoſſible to deſcribe the willingneſs of the friends to help in every reſpect.

I take this opportunity of returning them my ſincere thanks. Their kindneſs is engraven on my heart in indelible characters. It can never be eraſed. May the living God reward them and the Mancheſter, &c. friends a thouſand fold in their own boſom, for the good they conferred on us! May he bleſs them in their body and ſoul; in their family

family and children; in their baſket and ſtore; in their going out and coming in; in their buſineſs, and in their religious connexions; in the church, and in the world; in time, and through the ages of eternity! And, may he permit us all, at laſt, to meet around his throne, where we ſhall have to adore the triune Jehovah, world without end.

I ſhall finiſh this ſhort account with two obſervations. Firſt, Several of the preachers imagined that my dear wife was not formerly ſo poorly as ſhe often appeared to be. I have already obſerved, Mr. Mather oppoſed my ſtaying three years in Aberdeen, though he had been three years in Hull himſelf, but could not accompliſh his deſire. In the laſt conference, he jearingly obſerved, when they were attempting to juſtify long removes, "If my wife had got ſo much good as I profeſſed in Alnwick, this was ſufficient to ſhow, that in ſome caſes, long removes were neceſſary." I readily acknowledged it; but ſtill maintained, that a vaſt number of the removes were unneceſſary. It pleaſed God to ſuffer my dear wife to ſicken and die in Mr. Mather's preſence, (as it were) to convince him, and all that are of the ſame feelings, that neither of us were hypocrites, in complaining formerly of her trouble.

Secondly, Some have been ſo cruel as to aſſert, that her affliction and death were occaſioned by the meaſures I have purſued, in oppoſing the preachers. But nothing can be more falſe than this aſſertion. I can appeal to the friends in Alnwick circuit, and in every place where we have been ſince the conference, whether ſhe ever gave a ſingle hint of being diſſatisfied with my conduct, or the conſequences of it? The friends in Leeds and in Mancheſter can bear teſtimony, that an inſinuation of this nature, is extremely unchriſtian. Her letters to me prove the contrary, to a demonſtration,

But had ſhe died of a broken heart, (which is utterly contrary to truth) was it my conduct, or the conduct and cruelty of the conference that led to this? Setting aſide the perſecution I met with before the conference, my expulſion, and being publiſhed through the nation as the vileſt of the vile, the manner of my being expelled might have affected a heart leſs ſuſceptible of feeling than her's. After I had ſerved the connexion twelve years, and the preachers never attempted to charge me with any thing immoral, yet they turned me out, without allowing me a ſingle farthing to help

help myſelf with. They only gave me back what I had ſubſcribed to the preachers' fund, without any intereſt. My wife had not received a farthing for quarterage for eight years, though many preachers' wives, who have two or three times her income, receive their quarterage regularly, as though they had not a ſhilling in the world. By not taking her quarterage, ſhe ſaved the connexion ninety-ſix pounds, beſides what ſhe ſaved in frugality and good management. And yet they turned her out of houſe and harbour, without allowing her one ſhilling, either to remove from Alnwick, or begin houſe-keeping with in any place. The firſt quarter after we went to Mancheſter, Mr. Rutherford wanted to make it an article in a leader's meeting, that no perſon ſhould have a ticket who circulated or read my books, heard me preach, or gave me any ſupport. They have even grudged the kindneſs of friends, declaring in letters, and in converſation, that I had received ſo many pounds at ſuch or ſuch a place, when in reality I had not received a halfpenny, or nothing in compariſon of what they aſſerted. The friends know my ſituation, and have kindly helped me. Their conduct toward me has in part compenſated for the cruelty of the conference, in turning me out without a halfpenny. The preachers have alſo publiſhed what a vaſt of money I ſhall get by the Monitor, and endeavoured to inſinuate that this is the object I have in view in all my proceedings. Now I appeal to every candid reader, if theſe things together were not enough to break a heart of ſtone? But ſo far from their having this effect on my dear wife, ſhe bore them as part of her croſs, and chearfully ſubmitted to the will of God.

I ſhall juſt add in concluding, if I were to get ſeveral hundred pounds by printing and the help of friends, ſurely the leading men of the conference would not unchriſtian me for that, when they have done every thing in their power to make me poor enough? But I here offer to any perſon who will advance me fifty pounds, to turn over to him the Monitor, and he ſhall have all the accounts regularly from the printer, and I promiſe to provide materials as good as I can, to make up the number eighteen, according to what I have propoſed. And I alſo offer, if called upon at the next conference, to ſhew what I have received from the friends in different places, and what I have diſburſed. And if I have received more than I ſhall then have expended, I offer to

 diſpoſe

diſpoſe of that money, as a committee of the friends ſhall appoint.

I moſt ſincerely pray that God would mercifully look from heaven on the whole connexion, and ſave it from every thing that threatens its ruin! May he bring about ſuch a change among us, that every thing may be fixed on a ſolid and firm foundation; that no deſigning men may have power to lord it over the conſciences of their brethren! May he cauſe unity, peace, and concord, to return on goſpel terms, that the connexion may be one for ever! And may he graciouſly forgive thoſe who have injured me in any reſpect, that they may have nothing to anſwer for on account of what they have done to me or mine! And may he bring us all into ſuch a glorious ſtate of goſpel liberty, that we may fill up our place in the church and the world, according to the direction of his word, and be happy together, world without end! AMEN.

A. KILHAM.

EPWORTH, 1ſt *April*, 1797.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

ASHTON,

ON THE

Morning of the 26th February, 1797,

FROM

2 Samuel, xii. 21, 22, 23.

Then ſaid his Servants unto him, What Thing is this that thou haſt done? Thou didſt faſt and weep for the Child while it was alive: but when the Child was dead, thou didſt riſe and eat Bread. And he ſaid While the Child was yet alive, I faſted and wept; for I ſaid, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the Child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore ſhould I faſt? Can I bring him back again? I ſhall go to him, but he ſhall not return to me.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WHEN I preached the following Diſcourſes I had not the leaſt Thought of publiſhing them. But as it is the Deſire of ſeveral reſpectable Friends, that heard them, to ſee them in Print, for the general Good, I have chearfully complied with their Requeſt, hoping the God of Heaven will attend them with his Bleſſing, to all that ſhall read them.

The leading Ideas are retained. But as I never could preach twice exactly in the ſame Words, from one text, there is of conſequence a little Variation of Expreſſion. It was more than a Month after they were preached, before I wrote them. The candid Reader will make every neceſſary Allowance for any Thing he may find in them, which he thinks might be mended. As I always judge for myſelf when I read any Man's Works, whatever may be his Name or Abilities, ſo I wiſh every Perſon to uſe his own Judgment, that reads any Thing which I have written, and to follow me no farther than I follow Chriſt and his Apoſtles.

A. KILHAM.

A Sermon, &c.

2 Samuel, xii. 21, 22, 23.

We are informed that David grievouſly ſinned againſt the Lord: in an unguarded hour, ſuitable temptation was preſented to him. His heart led him to yield to the adverſary. He gave place to the devil, and ſinned againſt the Lord his God One ſin generally leads to another. He added murder to adultery, with a deſign to cover his offence, and by this means rendered himſelf exceedingly criminal before all. It appears, that for a ſeaſon, his heart was not ſufficiently affected with his guilt. He ſeems to have gone forward in his crimes without humbling himſelf before the Lord.

At length Nathan the prophet was ſent unto him. By a ſuitable parable he led David to paſs ſentence againſt the man that was ſuppoſed to have taken his neighbour's lamb, and ſpared his own flock; and by this meaſure he condemned himſelf. The prophet applied the ſubject to his conſcience. It was faſtened as a nail in a ſure place. Conviction immediately ſeized his heart. He felt remorſe in his ſoul on account of the evils he had given place to, and owned his guilt before the prophet of the living Jehovah. No ſooner was he ſufficiently affected with what he had done, than Nathan ſaid unto him, "The Lord hath put away thy ſin: thou ſhalt not die." But at the ſame time he informed the king of Iſrael, that the child he appeared particularly attached to, ſhould ſurely die. Though the Lord did not require that David ſhould fall a victim to the law, which required that murder ſhould be avenged in th

death of him that occaſioned it, yet he came near to this great prince, by determining to remove from his arms, the child that was exceedingly dear to him.

It appears that David ſuppoſed the threatening was conditional, and that the Lord would not go to the utmoſt extent of the judgment denounced. We can hardly ſuppoſe, that he would have purſued the meaſures he did purſue, had he been fully perſuaded, that the threatening was abſolute. When the hand of the Lord was ſtretched out in the affliction of the child, he was greatly affected. He humbled himſelf at the foot-ſtool of the Lord, and refuſed to be comforted. He lay all night upon the ground, and would by no means allow himſelf the ſupport which was neceſſary to preſerve life. The whole family appeared affected with his diſtreſs. They ſaw the anguiſh of his heart, and were concerned for his preſervation.

At length it pleaſed God to releaſe the child from all its miſeries. His affliction ended in death. It appears that David's ſervants ſuppoſed he would follow the conduct of thoſe, who are more affected when their children or friends die, than they are in the time of their affliction. They were afraid of informing him that the child was dead; but he ſoon perceived, by their whiſpering together, that ſome change had taken place, and therefore aſked them, if the child was dead. When he was aſſured that this was the caſe, he immediately altered his conduct: "He aroſe from the earth, and waſhed and anointed himſelf—changed his apparel—went into the houſe of the Lord and worſhipped: then he went to his own houſe, and when he required, they ſet bread before him, and he did eat."

He firſt prepared to worſhip in the houſe of God, and then to behave in his family as he had formerly done. He was conſcious it was his duty to acquieſce in the will of God; and, that inſtead of murmuring, he ought to worſhip and adore. At the ſame time he was convinced that he ought to receive ſuitable food for the ſupport of his own life, and to act in the preſence of his family, as he had done, before the child was afflicted.

It appears, however, that David's conduct was not according to the maxims of this world, even in that age.—His ſervants expected that he would have been more diſtreſſed when his child died, than he had been in his affliction. They ſuppoſed he would be inconſolable. Perhaps

they

they imagined, he would act more like a man deranged in the trying hour, than a person influenced by cool reason.—They had no idea that religion would teach him to glorify God in the midst of his troubles, and lead him to act in them as a true follower of the Lord his God. In the midst of their astonishment they said unto him, "What thing is this that thou hast done? &c." What is the reason thou hast not followed the maxims that are established among men? What has prevented thee from giving place to the grief that thousands experience on such trying occasions? We are utterly at a loss to understand the motives from whence this conduct arises, and what thou feelest different from other men, to lead thee to behave so contrary to them?

"And he said unto them, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him; but he shall not return to me." While the child was yet alive, there was a degree of hope in David's heart, that he might live. He could not prevail upon himself to believe, that the threatening was absolute. He was led to suppose, the Lord would be gracious to him, in removing his affliction, and restoring him to health again; but when he was assured that the child was dead, he was fully convinced he ought to seek his life no longer. He argued wisely with his servants upon the subject. Do you suppose, that my fasting and prayers will raise the child from the dead? Is it possible for me to use any efforts to bring him back again? I know assuredly, that I shall go to him; but he shall not return to me. In a few months, or years, I shall have done with the things of this life, and then I shall meet my child in the world of spirits, to join him in singing the anthems of the skies. He will never *return* to this wilderness, to endure the troubles that are incident to mortality. He has entered into a better state, and met with a more delightful situation.

Having made these remarks upon the subject, as it refers to David, let us now endeavour to improve it to our own advantage. There are two things this text will lead us to consider. First, How we ought to behave when our relations and friends are afflicted. Secondly, How we ought to behave when the Lord removes them from us. The sub-

ject

ject is important. It demands our ſerious attention: we are deeply intereſted in it. If we beſeech the God of our mercies, to help at this time, he may condeſcend to meet with, and bleſs us in his worſhip. May his preſence be with us, that our meeting together may be for his glory!

I. We are to enquire, How we ought to behave when our relations and friends are afflicted.

1. When the Lord, in his great mercy, gives us relations and friends that are kind and obliging, we feel our hearts cloſely united to them. We ſincerely love thoſe that are bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh. Their wants become ours. We are ready, on all occaſions, to ſhow our regard for them. We ſeek their comfort and welfare continually. We cheerfully adminiſter to their neceſſities, and take a ſingular pleaſure in adding to their happineſs. If our love to them, ariſe from the love of God, ſhed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghoſt given to us, it will lead us to be kind and affectionate to all that we have to do with in the world. It will lead us more eſpecially to be careful in all things, that we may be of ſervice to thoſe who are near to us by the ties of nature.

2. It is our duty to feel much for our relations, when they are brought into any kind of trouble or ſorrow. If the afflicting hand of God be upon them, we ſhould conſider their frame, and remember that they are but duſt. We cannot imagine what many endure under the influence of acute pain. Weariſome nights, and troubleſome days, are appointed for them. In the evening, they frequently wiſh for the light of the morning: and, in the morning, they earneſtly deſire the ſhades of the evening, that balmy ſleep may give them ſome relief. When we ſeriouſly reflect on their ſtate, it is impoſſible to be unconcerned. If our little ones are afflicted, and cannot inform us of their troubles, it adds to our tenderneſs, while we read in their ſighs and tears, as well as in their expreſſive looks, what they endure. And if our friends, advanced to years of knowledge in life, are ſo tortured with pain, and ſo reduced by affliction, that they cannot relate to us their miſeries, we are amazingly concerned on their behalf. Ought we not to pity them in their trouble, and ſhare, if poſſible, in their ſorrows? Were we to be unaffected, would it not be to our reproach? and, were we unkind, would it not be ſinful in the ſight of God? Ought we not, in ſuch caſes, to be kind-

ly

ly affectioned to our friends, that their hearts may be comforted, in the midſt of their trouble?

3. It is our duty to do every thing, in our power, to aſſiſt them in their afflictions. We ought to attend upon them, by night and by day, that we may be ready to help in their trouble. If it be in our power, whatever may be of ſervice, either to alleviate their pain, or to remove their complaints, we ought to adminiſter it with cheerfulneſs. If a man refuſe to help the diſtreſſed in his houſe, to ſave expence, and preſer laying up treaſure on earth, to the health of his family, it is hardly poſſible to find words to deſcribe his wretched character. The afflicted have need of many things to comfort them in their ſorrows. But ſhould we refuſe to part with our ſubſtance, to adminiſter to their neceſſities, this of itſelf would be *a denial of the chriſtian faith, and prove us to be worſe than Infidels.* On the other hand, when a man prefers the welfare of his family to every thing this world affords, and cheerfully parts with any thing that is neceſſary to help them in diſtreſs, he acts the part which the goſpel requires, and makes religion reſpectable to thoſe who are around him.

4. It is our duty to ſeek help from others, if our own efforts fail. Though we are conſcious, were it the will of our Maker, he could reſtore the afflicted to health, without the uſe of means, yet this ſhould not prevent us from ſeeking help from thoſe that are uſeful to thouſands. Many of them are ſecretly led, by an indulgent providence, earneſtly to deſire to remove the miſeries of their fellow-creatures. They ſtudy, night and day, how to help the wretched in diſtreſs. From the wiſdom they acquire, by reading and obſervation, they are ſufficiently qualified to aſſiſt in a number of caſes. Should we refuſe to employ them, for fear of the expence, or from an opinion that our own preſcriptions may anſwer better than their's, we may fooliſhly add to the miſeries of the afflicted, and haſten their death. On the other hand, if we provide all the help which the ſkill of the phyſician, or the power of medicine can afford, ſhould they afterwards languiſh and die, we ſhall have ſatisfaction in reflecting, that we have ſpared no expence to help them in their affliction. This reflection alone, will give us a thouſand times more pleaſure, than all the riches in the univerſe would afford, had we neglected our duty to thoſe that had a right to demand our help.

5. The

5. The religion of Jeſus does not forbid our earneſtly deſiring the health of the afflicted. We may ſincerely wiſh that all their miſeries were removed, and that we might live with them in health for years to come. If theſe deſires are regulated by the ſcriptures, we ſhall have the anſwer of a good conſcience in them. But ſhould our deſires exceed the bounds of moderation, and degenerate into anxious ſolicitude, without any ſubmiſſion to the will of God, this will contract guilt on our ſpirit, and expoſe us to condemnation. If our anxiety ſhould lead us to murmur and repine at the diſpenſations of providence, we ſhall diſhonour our Maker, and reproach our religious profeſſion. But if our deſires are ſanctified by the word and ſpirit of God, they will be attended with good to ourſelves, and at the ſame time be an ornament to our character.

6. When human help fails, we ought to ſeek help from God. In a thouſand inſtances he has anſwered prayer in the recovery of thoſe, who were given up by the phyſician. His hand has been ſtretched out to rebuke their complaints; and he has renewed their ſtrength to the aſtoniſhment of all that were around them. The fervent effectual prayer of the righteous availeth much. When we have uſed every mean that can be deviſed by man, and find no change takes place, we ought to have recourſe to God in prayer. Means that are ſuitable can be of no ſervice unleſs he give them ſucceſs. The iſſues of life and death are in his hands. When we do every thing in our power to be of ſervice to the afflicted, and commit our cauſe to God in fervent prayer, intreating him to look from heaven in tender mercy upon us, he may be gracious, and cauſe his glory in the face of Jeſus to appear in our behalf.

In order to help our prayers, and to add to their fervour, we ought to examine what is the cauſe of the afflictions of our friends? Many things may appear to ſatisfy our minds in this inquiry. But if we examine our hearts attentively, it is probable, we ſhall find, that in ſome meaſure, we are the cauſe of their trouble. We have given them, it is probable, too great a ſhare in our affections. We have ſuffered them to be the idols of our heart. We have not acted toward them as the Lord our God requires. We have encouraged thoſe principles in our children which ought to have been nipped in the bud. Perhaps we have refuſed to reſtrain them in many things contrary to God. We have

not

not behaved towards them as we ought to have done. If we have reaſon to bleſs God that none of theſe things are chargeable on our conſcience, the Lord may ſuffer afflictions to come, to be of ſervice to the afflicted, and to all that are connected with the family. It may be for the trial of our faith, and of all our graces. Whom the Lord loves he chaſtens, and ſcourges every ſon that he receives. He often chooſes his people in the furnace, that they may be made partakers of his holineſs. And when he ſanctifies every ſtroke of his rod to our advantage, it is our duty chearfully to ſubmit.

7. That our prayers may he effectual, we ſhould humble ourſelves particularly before God. Though David was poſitively informed that his child ſhould die, yet he ſought the Lord in extraordinary means, hoping that he would be gracious, and ſpare his ſon. We ought to humble ourſelves exceedingly before God, acknowledging our ſins at his foot-ſtool, and ſeeking mercy in Chriſt Jeſus. We ſhould not forget, that while they ſuffer in the midſt of trouble, we are ſpared as monuments of divine mercy. If the Lord had dealt with us according to our ſin, or rewarded us according to our iniquity, we ſhould have been plunged into the greateſt depths of diſtreſs and miſery. If our humiliation has a proper effect on our own mind, it will lead us to be exceedingly importunate at the throne of grace. Our petitions ſhould be directed to God for mercy and ſalvation, both for ourſelves and the afflicted. If we intreat the Lord to remove the guilt of paſt offences, and to give peace to the conſciences that are troubled, we have many encouraging promiſes to build our hope upon, in the word of God. And ſhould we earneſtly ſeek from his indulgent hand, to obtain a new heart, and a right ſpirit, we have reaſon to believe, he will not withhold them from us. When we aſk of God for mercies which he has promiſed to impart, we ought to believe in hope againſt hope, till they are revealed to our minds. But when we plead for any favours which are not promiſed in the ſcriptures, we ſhould do it with ſubmiſſion to the divine will. Perhaps the Lord ſees it abundantly beſt for our dear relations to have done with the things that are ſeen, that they may enter into the joy he has prepared for them. He may determine to take them ſooner than us, to their great reward. If he remove them from the evil to come, our temporary loſs will

will be their eternal gain. Should we weigh theſe reflections ſeriouſly in our own minds, we ſhall moderate our deſires for their recovery. After we have intreated the Lord to remove the bitter cup far from them, we ſhall qualify our prayers by adding, "Not my will, but thy will be done." When we thus aſk the life of a child, of a beloved partner, or any friend, he will conſider our requeſt, and deal with us as infinite wiſdom ſhall direct.

8. Laſtly, David uſed extraordinary means to accompliſh his end. He ſeparated himſelf from the family. He refuſed neceſſary food. He lay all night on the ground. He was in an agony till he learned the will of God concerning him. Should we imitate his example, it may be attended with many advantages. If we add faſting to prayer, and retiring from company, ſpend whole nights in ſolemn humiliation and addreſſes to the throne of grace, we may ſoon perceive the good effects of this upon our own minds, and on the ſouls of the afflicted. If the Lord were to refuſe anſwering the petitions we preſent before him for the life of our friends, while he quickens our ſouls, and comforts the hearts of the afflicted, we ſhall have abundant cauſe to be thankful. It is hardly poſſible to be ſincere in ſolemn extraordinary humiliation before God, without receiving ſpiritual good: And in many caſes, the Lord anſwers thoſe prayers that are offered before him, in regard to other things. We may reſt aſſured, that ſuch exertions, ſanctified by the grace of God, will be of ſervice to us in our way to eternal life.

II. Let us now conſider how we ought to behave, when the Lord removes our relations from us.

1. We ought to acquieſce in the divine will. When he ſuffers death to ſnatch them from us, we ought by no means to oppoſe his will. Were we to murmur and repine at his providence, and complain of the loſs we have ſuſtained with unchriſtian reflections, we ſhould diſhonour the Lord our God, reproach our religious profeſſion, and ſin againſt our own ſoul. If the Lord has taken them from the evil to come, and we are conſcious that they are admitted into a more glorious ſituation, why ſhould we murmur or repine? Have we not aſked with ſubmiſſion to the divine will, that their life might be ſpared, referring our caſe fully to God, and would it not be ſinful now to think that he has dealt hardly with us? It is impoſſible but to feel much on parting with our

our deareſt friends. The God of nature does not forbid our mourning on that account. He admits of our acting according to his bleſſed word in ſuch caſes: To ſorrow with hope. Jeſus Chriſt wept when he was at the tomb where Lazarus was interred. It often happens, that thoſe who act out of character at the death of their friends, and ſeem determined never to be comforted again, ſoon forget them, and turn their attention to other things; but thoſe who feel and ſorrow as Chriſtians, hold the memory of their friends dear to them, after many days. It is the glory of Chriſtians to ſubmit cheerfully to the will of God, in things that are ſeverely trying to fleſh and blood. The wicked, or ſelf-righteous, may call this a want of affection for our friends; but it ariſes from the love of God revealed in our ſouls by Chriſt Jeſus. It is a principle planted in the heart by the Spirit of God, and leads thoſe that profeſs it to cry out, on all occaſions, "Good is the will of the Lord."

2. We ſhould lay aſide every thing that is contrary to ſubmiſſion to the will of God. David aroſe, waſhed himſelf, and put on a change of raiment. He appeared in his family as he had formerly done. If a perſon were to profeſs reſignation to the divine will, and act contrary to it in his life and converſation, his profeſſion would be vain. But when the ſigns of grief are laid aſide, and the man of God appears ſatisfied with the diſpenſations of providence, he has an outward conduct that ornaments the goſpel of God our Saviour. If, like David, we have retired from the world, and even from our family, while our deareſt friends have been ſuffering; if, like him, we have refuſed our neceſſary food, and ſpent whole nights in prayer, on their account, we ought, at their deceaſe, to act a different part. Were we not to act a different part, it would be a teſtimony againſt us. It would evidence, that we have not that ſubmiſſion to the will of God, that becomes perſons in our ſituation. There was a time when David himſelf acted out of character in this reſpect. When he found that his beloved Abſolem, (who had lifted up his heel againſt him, and was purſuing him with an hoſt,) was dead, he gave place to his paſſions, and acted a very unchriſtian part. He went about crying, "Oh, Abſolem, my ſon! My ſon, Abſolem! Would to God I had died in thy place!" He would not appear before the people till he was conſtrained. And his conduct on the occaſion, when he preſented himſelf before

them, ſufficiently evidenced, that he did not ſubmit cheerfully to the will of God. His behaviour, on that occaſion, diſcovered a want of that piety which poſſeſſed his heart, at the time our text alludes to. If we follow his example, at the death of Abſolem, we ſhall reproach our profeſſion, diſhonour the living God, and bring guilt upon our own conſciences. But if we follow his example, as it is recorded in this paſſage, we ſhall teſtify to all, that we acquieſce in the will of God, and at the ſame time, both ornament our chriſtian profeſſion, and have the anſwer of a good conſcience.

3. We ought to appear before God in the congregations of his people, to worſhip at his footſtool. No ſooner had David heard of the death of his child, than he prepared for the houſe of God, and haſtened to adore his great benefactor, for all his mercies. I apprehend, he praiſed God for the deliverance he had given to his child from all its miſeries in this life. At the ſame time, he would plead with the Almighty for new mercies, and endeavour to bind himſelf by new obligations, to be fully on the Lord's ſide for ever.——What a different conduct many manifeſt on ſuch occaſions! The houſe of God is forſaken by them for many weeks. They never appear with his people to worſhip at his footſtool, till ſeveral months are elapſed. Though they have reaſon to believe, that their relations are taken from the evil to come, yet they give place to ſuch exceſſive grief, that they cannot bear the thought of worſhiping publicly with the people God. If we deſire to glorify his name, who bought us with his blood, we ought to follow the example placed before us in this paſſage. Let us worſhip in the houſe of God, with thoſe that love the Lord Jeſus in ſincerity. We ought to praiſe his adorable name, for ſtanding by our dear relations in the midſt of the ſhadow of death. We ſhould bleſs him from our heart, for preparing them for himſelf, and graciouſly diſcharging them from the painful war. We ought to bind ourſelves in new bonds, to be elevated in body and ſpirit to his ſervice. We ſhould entreat him to help us by his Spirit, to walk as the redeemed of the Lord, that when it is our lot to leave the world, we alſo may be found in Chriſt, without ſpot and blameleſs.

4. We ought to appear in our own houſe, as the followers of our divine Maſter. David appeared in his family as uſual. He commanded his ſervants, and they ſet bread before him,

and

and he did eat. His conduct, in this reſpect, would baniſh the gloom that had been manifeſt in the houſe, while he was exerciſed in faſting and prayer. Many that call themſelves chriſtians, on the death of their friends, not only refuſe to worſhip in the houſe of God, but determine to refuſe their neceſſary food. They withdraw from the family, and ſpend a great deal of time alone, brooding over their own thoughts, till they are melancholy. They get ſuch an antipathy to company, that they will hardly be ſeen by a friend. An horrible gloom hangs upon their countenance, and the whole family is unhappy on their account. Such a conduct diſcovers a very great want of that piety which the goſpel offers to true believers. It appears, that ſuch perſons imagine, they do well to be angry. If they could only view themſelves as they are in the ſight of God, and as all ſenſible pious chriſtians view them, they would be aſhamed of their conduct, and determine to act a more honourable part. If we would follow the example of David in this matter, our families would be comforted; our relations would rejoice; our chriſtian brethren would admire the grace of God communicated to us; we ſhould ſee that we have not believed in vain; we ſhould be happy in our own minds; and the living God would be glorified by our conduct before him in his church.

5. Our relations and neighbours, who are unacquainted with the religion of Jeſus, may cry out, "What thing is this that ye have done? While your friends were afflicted you faſted and prayed, and were exceedingly diſtreſſed; but now they are dead, you have left off to weep and mourn!" It frequently happens, that many of our acquaintances neglect every duty they owe to their friends, in the time of affliction as it refers to the ſalvation of their ſoul. They keep hoping they will recover. For want of laying to heart their ſtate, and ſeeking bleſſing in Chriſt Jeſus upon them, they flatter them with hopes of recovery, and do every thing in their power to prevent them from thinking on death. They never calmly reflect what their feelings will be, ſhould they be removed. The deluſive hope of recovery often prevails in the afflicted and their friends, till within a few moments of their departure out of this wilderneſs. When this is the caſe, thoſe that ſurvive, having no intereſt in Chriſt, nor conſolation from the Holy Spirit, are immediately deluged in ſorrow. They appear amazed that

death has done his office ſo ſuddenly, and to them unexpectedly. They weep and mourn in extreme ſorrow and diſtreſs. A thouſand things preſs on their ſpirits to make them unhappy. Perhaps the greateſt of theſe are ſerious reflections on their own ſtate, and on the unfitneſs of their friends to meet death. If they have been inſtrumental in flattering their dying relations, and been a means of hindering them in their preparation for death, theſe reflections fill their hearts with ſorrow. We need not be aſtoniſhed for a moment, that perſons of this deſcription ſhould be abundantly more grieved and unhappy, when their friends are dead, than they were while they were living. And as ſo very few, either profeſſors of religion, or ſinners act differently, when any are following the example mentioned in the text, it is natural for their neighbours to aſk, "What thing is this that thou haſt done?"

The chriſtian can anſwer, I have not followed the maxims of this world. I refuſed to flatter the afflicted, or to impoſe on myſelf. I laid to heart the afflictions and miſeries of the perſons I loved, and bore them on my ſoul before God, in my fervent addreſſes to his throne. I ſpoke freely to them of their ſtate, and warned them of their danger. I endeavoured to comfort the minds of thoſe that had believed, with the promiſes that hold out eternal life and happineſs. To thoſe that ſought the Lord, I applied the gracious declarations of the Old and New Teſtament, which are given for the encouragement of penitents. I endeavoured to lead them to Chriſt, that they might be ſaved by grace through faith. I beheld the approach of death, and endeavoured to prepare for the worſt. When I actually did this office, it was what I looked for and expected for ſome time. Theſe are the reaſons that have led me to act contrary to the maxims of the world.

6. But wherefore ſhould I faſt and weep now? Can I by ſuch means as theſe bring back my friends from the world of ſpirits? Will any efforts of mine reſtore them to life, and give them again to my family? While there was hope of their recovery, I faſted and wept, not knowing whether or not the Lord would be gracious to me, in raiſing up the afflicted from the bed of languiſhing. As no poſitive declaration had been revealed from heaven, that their affliction was unto death, I thought it highly reaſonable to continue my religious exerciſes before God in their behalf. Had I been

been in David's ſtate, perhaps the ſolemn declaration of God reſpecting the death of his child, would have prevented me. But as I had no ſuch declaration to cut off my hope, I continued ſeeking the Lord in the uſe of the means; and reſolved to abide at the footſtool of his throne, till I ſhould ſee what he would do. But when the King of terrors appeared, and ſnatched from time into eternity my dear friends, I then perceived it was my duty to ſubmit. It would be a degree of madneſs in me to act as the world does. I cannot alter the decrees of heaven by any exerciſes of mine. I cannot be privileged again with the company and converſation of my friends. They have paid the debt of nature, and are gone to reſt in Abraham's boſom. Though the body is conſigned to the ſilent tomb, yet the ſoul lives in the world of ſpirits.

I ſhall go unto them, but they ſhall not return unto me. They live in a more glorious ſtate, who have left this world in the faith of Chriſt. We cannot conceive what God has laid up for them that love him. If we knew the happineſs they enjoy, and the amazing bliſs which ſurrounds them, we ſhould deteſt the thought of attempting to bring them back to this wilderneſs, if it were in our power. We are conſcious, that nothing would be ſo painful to thoſe who ſurround the throne of God, as the idea of being ſent back into this world. It would be cruel in us to wiſh to interrupt their felicity. We ſhould bleſs God for taking them into ſuch a glorious ſtate. The thoughts of their being at God's right hand, ſhould baniſh every painful reflection from our minds, and lead us to adore that hand that has ſafely conducted them to the holy hill of Zion.

If we are the ſincere followers of Chriſt, and continue faithful to death, we ſhall ſoon go unto them. The thought of joining the company of thoſe whom we loved on earth, ſhould animate our minds, and lead us to haſten our preparation for that glorious period. We ſhall ſoon have done with the things that are ſeen. The place we fill up in the church and in the world, will ſoon know us no more for ever. The meſſenger, death, will receive his commiſſion, and we ſhall be gathered to our fathers. Perhaps our deareſt friends may hover around our beds, and be part of our heavenly convoy, to guard us in ſafety to the regions above. This two-fold conſideration ſhould baniſh exceſſive grief from our minds. The happineſs of our

friends in the paradiſe of God, and the proſpect of being admitted, in a little time, to go where they are. Can we grieve immoderately with theſe proſpects before us?—Ought we not rather to rejoice in hope of the glory of God? If all that ſurround us are at a loſs to find out the motive from which we act, and if they unite to reproach and perſecute, let us patiently endure the contradiction of ſinners againſt ourſelves, that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Let us finiſh the ſubject with three remarks.

1. It behoves us all to ſeek that religion which will bring us into ſubjection to the will of God. If we have recourſe to the father of our mercies, by the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he will change us from nature to grace. A glorious work of the Spirit will be accompliſhed in our minds, We ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make us free. The ways of God will be pleaſant to our minds. All his paths will be flowery and peace before us. Religion will be the delight of our ſoul. If divine grace reign in us, we ſhall go on our way rejoicing. We ſhall forget the things that are behind, and reach to the things which are before. We ſhall be happy in the things that make for our peace, while we have to do with the things that are ſeen. If our hearts and lives are dedicated to God, we ſhall comprehend with all ſaints, what is the length and breadth, the depth and height, and know the love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge.

2. We ſhould never forget that all we have, and all we are, belong to God. If he has given us many bleſſings in this life; if we have affectionate partners, and lovely children; if we find a number of advantages through them; if they help and comfort us in life, and ſeem anxious to ſerve us, we ſhould never forget that they are the Lord's.—He has a right to take them to himſelf in any way, or by any means moſt agreeable to himſelf. It is our duty to acquieſce in his will reſpecting them, on all occaſions. If we ſuffer theſe reflections to have a ſuitable influence on our minds, we ſhall endeavour to guard againſt undue affection, and ſeek on all occaſions to love them with purity of heart, as well as religious fervour.

3. We ſhould always feel for our friends in their trouble, and afford them all the help in our power. But at the ſame time, we ſhould freely give them up to the Lord

their

heir God. If he requires their removal, we muſt ſubmit, however contrary it may be to our natural feelings. If we faſt and pray in the time of their affliction, hoping God will be gracious in removing their complaints; yet if he refuſe to grant our requeſt, we ought to cry out, "It is the Lord, let him do as he pleaſeth." A ſuitable behaviour in the houſe of God, and in our own family, will be uſeful to ourſelves, and be ſervicable to others. They will be led to behold the advantages of true religion exemplified in us, and may be brought to accept of mercy on the terms of the goſpel; and be led to ſeek the ſame experience which the Lord Jehovah has communicated to us.—We may live happily in the enjoyment of the bleſſings of the goſpel, and die to meet them in heaven, to reign with God in glory for ever.

May the father of all our mercies bleſs what we have heard to our mutual advantage, that we may be happy in this world, and bleſſed with a place at his right hand, in the world of ſpirits, and the praiſe ſhall be aſcribed to him world without end.

END OF THE FIRST SERMON.

A SERMON,

Preached at ASHTON, on the 26th of February,

Immediately after the Funeral of

Mrs. Sarah Kilham,

From REV. xiv. 13.

And I heard a voice from heaven, ſaying unto me, Write, Bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours; and their works do follow them.

IN this chapter we have a deſcription of the glorious time, when the goſpel ſhall be preached in every nation under heaven. But we have at the ſame time a lively deſcription of the awful judgments which Babylon will have to endure. The miſeries they will have to experience, are repreſented in ſtrong language. The patience of the ſaints in keeping the commandments of God at this alarming criſis, is held out as worthy of our moſt ſerious conſideration. To obey the voice of God in proſperity, and be patient in our various engagements in life, is a very great advantage. But to hold faſt the beginning of our confidence, without wavering, when we are perſecuted, and patiently to poſſeſs our ſouls in tribulation, is an infallible proof that we have not believed in vain.

The words of our text are immediately added. Perhaps the voice which St. John heard, was the voice of an angel, or of the ſpirit of a juſt man made perfect. We are aſſured from the ſcriptures, that angels and glorified ſaints know the advantages which are found at God's right hand.

The

The happineſs of the dead in the Lord appears ſo glorious to them, that they might well cry out with this great apoſtle, Bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth. This teſtimony was immediately confirmed and explained, by the Spirit of God—"That they may reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them."

In ſpeaking from this paſſage, let us firſt conſider what ſeems neceſſarily implied in dying in the Lord: And, ſecondly, explain the bleſſedneſs of that ſtate. May that God in whoſe preſence we are aſſembled on this ſolemn occaſion, divinely help us by his Holy Spirit! Without him we can do nothing. Except he help, vain is the help of man. Let me intreat an intereſt in the prayers of all that hear, that our meeting together may be for the glory of God and our mutual advantage. Then ſhall we ſpend a few moments comfortably with each other, and our meeting together will not be in vain.

I. Let us conſider what ſeems neceſſarily implied in dying in the Lord.

This expreſſion implies, that we muſt be in the Lord, according to the ſenſe of the ſcriptures, before we can die in him.

There is a being profeſſionally in the Lord, on account of our having been baptized in his name while we were in our infancy. It is poſſible for us, however, notwithſtanding we have been dedicated to God by our parents in the ordinance of baptiſm, to be far from him, and far from righteouſneſs. Among the thouſands that are called chriſtians, how very few have any other title to their belonging to Chriſt, but their having been ſprinkled with a little water, while they were young, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.

We may be notionally in Chriſt, and yet be deſtitute of that union which ſubſiſts between him and true believers.—Many, becauſe of their attendance on external duty, imagine that they are chriſtians; becauſe they attend upon the ordinances of God, and worſhip with his people, they ſuppoſe they belong to Chriſt, and have a right to expect the bleſſings he hath purchaſed for them. If we have ſuitable notions of his perſon, his office, and of the great things he has accompliſhed for our redemption; if we diſcover the nature and deſign of his religion; if we are capable of

ſpeaking

ſpeaking upon the doctrines of the goſpel with clearneſs to thoſe that ſurround us; if we have done many things for Chriſt in ſupport of his religion, yet this will avail nothing, unleſs we obtain a converſion of heart to God, and are united to him by the faith of the goſpel.

Previous to our being in Chriſt according to the ſenſe of the ſcriptures, we have been deeply convinced of our being far from God, and far from righteouſneſs. We are ſenſible that our iniquities have cauſed him to hide his face from us. Our tranſgreſſions have been multiplied; and by them we have been brought into the gall of bitterneſs, and into the bond of iniquity. We are conſcious that our ſins are of ſuch a nature, that except the Lord have mercy upon us, we muſt periſh for ever.

Before we are evangelically in Chriſt, we are awakened to a ſenſe of our depravity and corruption. We ſee in our fleſh dwells no good thing. Our heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked. We are under the influence of the carnal mind, which is enmity againſt God. We have nothing in our breaſts that is according to God. The whole head is ſick; the whole heart is faint; from the ſole of the foot, to the crown of the head, we are nothing but wounds, and bruiſes, and putrefying ſores. We are conſcious, that except a change be wrought in us by the Spirit of God, we cannot be happy in this world, or in the world to come.

Theſe diſcoveries of our ſtate deeply affect us. We are conſcious, no man can deliver his own ſoul. Except we are ſaved by grace through faith, we muſt be ruined for ever. We ſink beneath our guilt and corruption into a ſtate of ſelf-condemnation. Romans, vii. 25. is the language of our heart. Oh! wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death? No way opens to our view that can afford the leaſt hope of pardon or acceptance with God, but the new and living way, which the goſpel points out unto us.

Under the influence of our bondage and wretchedneſs, we are led to ſeek redemption in the blood of Jeſus, the forgiveneſs of ſins. In the means which the Redeemer eſtabliſhed, we look up to God, and implore the mercy which has been purchaſed for us in him. We wait before the Lord, pleading the promiſes which he has ſealed to us in Chriſt,

Chriſt, and determine to continue our addreſſes to his ſacred throne, until he have mercy upon us.

When we are led and aſſiſted by the Spirit to believe in the Lord Jeſus with our hearts unto righteouſneſs, then we are brought into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God. We obtain the bleſſings purchaſed for us by the blood of the everlaſting covenant, and ſet to our ſeal that God is true.

We are united to the Lord Jeſus. We are ingrafted into him. He is the true olive, and from him all our bleſſings flow. Being cemented to him by the influences of the Holy Spirit, as the graft is to the ſtock, we are made alive in him our gracious benefactor. And being made one Spirit with him, our ſouls are made happy by his bleſſing. The ſacred unction proceeding from Chriſt is communicated to us; and being united to him in this glorious myſtical union, we are enabled to bear fruit unto holineſs, that our end may be everlaſting life.

Jeſus Chriſt tells us he is the true vine. Believers are in him, as the branch is in the vine. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, neither can we, except we abide in him. Every branch in him the Father prunes that it may bear more fruit. He communicates grace from his fulneſs, and by it we are enabled to proſper in our way to heaven.

He is our living head, and we are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones. As no member can perform the offices belonging to it, except it continue connected with the head, neither can we, except we continue united to the Lord Jeſus. But by the communications of wiſdom and influence from him our living head, it is poſſible for us to fill up our place in the church, and in the world, to his glory.

The ſcriptures inform us, that thoſe who are in Chriſt, have fellowſhip with the Father and the Son. By this fellowſhip they grow up into Chriſt. They increaſe in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him. They ſeek to be made like him, that they may live with him for ever.

They ſeek daily to follow his doctrine and example in all things. His word is our rule. It is a light unto our feet, and a lanthorn to our paths. His ſpirit becomes our guide. He directs our feet in the way of peace. By following the Lord Jeſus in the regeneration, through good and evil report, in honour and diſhonour, we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God our Saviour. We increaſe in reſemblance to him, and ripen for the inheritance of the

ſaints in light. Having our hearts and affections placed on things above, we hold ourſelves in readineſs to bid adieu to the things that are ſeen, whenever the Lord ſhall require our ſouls at our hands.

To die in the Lord, is to die reconciled to him, and in his favour. Being reconciled to God by the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, they find a peace which paſſeth all underſtanding. The light of the countenance of the Great Jehovah ſhines upon them. They can look up with confidence and cry out, "My Lord and my God." This experience is always accompanied with ſuch a divine ſenſe of acceptance, as enables us to rejoice with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.

The ſcriptures aſſure us, that the favour of God is better than the life itſelf. Divine tokens of favour are communicated to our hearts, on our believing in the Son of God. Now a chriſtian looks up with confidence in the approach of death. He is aſſured he is not going to meet an angry Judge. A God that will take vengeance of him. Nor has he any apprehenſions that he will have the Eternal Jehovah his adverſary in the world of ſpirits. On the contrary, he views with pleaſure the glorious deſcription the ſcriptures give of his gracious Benefactor. He conſiders him as his covenant Father. A friend, ſticking cloſer to his people than a brother. Ready on all occaſions to impart good to his own children. Never diſpoſed to caſt off any that hang by faith upon him. Infinitely near the ſouls that truſt in him: eſpecially in the times of their adverſity. Views of this nature animate the dying chriſtian, and lead him to caſt his all into the hands of his faithful Creator, not fearing but the promiſes ſuitable to his ſtate, will be fulfilled in his experience.

2. Believers die in the Lord, poſſeſſed of that piety and love which his ſoul delights in. They are not only juſtified fully by his grace, through the redemption which is in Chriſt Jeſus, but they experience a new birth unto righteouſneſs. They are brought to inherit a lot among them that are ſanctified: Principles of piety are formed in their heart. Their graces are watered by the ſtreams of that river which makes glad the city of God. They evidence their piety in their tempers and diſpoſitions. Thoſe that ſee them, admire the grace of God, which dwells in their breaſt, and which they improve to his glory. As true

piety

piety in the heart always expreſſes itſelf in a ſuitable converſation, the followers of Jeſus Chriſt endeavour to let their light ſhine before men, that they may ſee their good works and glorify their Father who is in heaven.

The ſervants of the living God are made partakers of that love which paſſeth knowledge. Faith and hope are graces of the Spirit, which every chriſtian rejoices in; but love ſurpaſſeth them both. When their office is ended, love will continue and encreaſe, through the ages of ages. On our firſt converſion to the religion of Jeſus, this divine principle is formed in our heart: And as faith increaſes, love abounds in the ſoul. Thoſe that have lived for a number of years, ſerving God with readineſs of mind, find their love amazingly increaſed toward the Lord, and all mankind. It often happens, the nearer the believer comes to the end of his journey, the more his heart is warmed with this celeſtial fire. A new convert may confine his love to his own ſect or party; and a bigot may have a contracted ſpirit toward all that do not think and ſpeak as he does. The ſuperſtitious, and thoſe that contend for a party, may imagine they ought not to be too charitable to thoſe who do not walk with them; but the chriſtian, that has grown in grace, and in the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, experiences ſuch inlargement of ſoul in the approach of death, as often aſtoniſhes all that behold him. He may love with peculiar affection the ſincere of his own party; but, at the ſame time, his heart burns with the pureſt affection toward all that love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity. Names, and ſects, and parties, fall before this divine principle. Whoever bears the image and ſuperſcription of Chriſt, whatever is his profeſſion, or whatever be the ſect or party to which he belongs, he claims him for a brother, beloved of God, and determines to give him the right hand of fellowſhip. He loves his neighbour as himſelf, in the ſenſe the ſcriptures require; and he loves his enemies from principle, as well as becauſe Jeſus Chriſt has commanded it. Happy the man who feels this love increaſing, as his days increaſe! Happy for the dying chriſtian who finds, that all the waters that are poured from every quarter are ſanctified of God, and are made like oil to this flame! This principle is abundantly ſtronger than death. It diſarms the king of terrors. It leads the believer boldly into the valley, and cauſes him to go forward courageouſly. He fears no evil, becauſe the God of love is with him. His rod, and his ſtaff, abundantly ſupport.

3. The chriſtian dies, with a meetneſs wrought in him, for the preſence of the Lord. By looking through the glaſs of the word to the perfections of the Deity, he is changed into his image, from glory to glory, by the holy Spirit. Every root of bitterneſs is removed from his heart. He is fully ſanctified throughout, body, ſoul, and ſpirit. He has apprehended that for which he was apprehended of God. He has attained the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt. He has reached the mark, towards which he has been preſſing, ſince his converſion. He is as a ſhock of corn, fully prepared for the heavenly garner. His graces are ripened and come to maturity. He is made meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light. His lamp is trimmed; his light ſhines; and, he is waiting to hear the bridegroom's voice. Happy ſtate! May we all wake up after the likeneſs of our glorious Redeemer, that when it is our lot to die, we may be found in him, without ſpot, and blameleſs!

4. A chriſtian dies in the true faith and hope of the goſpel. They know in whom they have believed. In their conflicts with the king of terrors, they can cry out, "O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? I know that my Redeemer liveth; and though, after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh I ſhall ſee God: whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf and not another." The man of God ſtands on the brink of eternity and declares, with the great apoſtle, "I have fought a good fight; I have finiſhed my courſe; I have kept the faith; henceforth, there is laid up for me, a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day." It is impoſſible to deſcribe the influence this faith has upon the ſoul. It is ten thouſand times more precious than the gold that is purified. It opens to the believer's view the inviſible world. It leads the chriſtian to have glorious views of the promiſed land.

The hope of the goſpel dwells in the hearts of true believers. It is blooming and full of immortality: It enables the chriſtian to ride ſafe in the midſt of the tempeſtuous ocean of trouble and pain. If the ſtorms of affliction are extremely ſevere, hope is like an anchor to the ſoul; it is both ſure and ſtedfaſt. It is ſurely fixed in the wounds of of the crucified. It is ſtedfaſt. It will bear up the ſoul through the conflict. It will never fail to be of ſervice to

thoſe who hope to the end. The advantages of this bleſſed principle are frequently experienced in times of health and ſtrength. But they are abundantly greater to thoſe who paſs through the dreary valley to the inheritance above. Faith and hope help the believer to croſs the Jordan of death; but they cannot enter Canaan with him. In that glorious place,

"Faith is loſt in ſight,
And hope in full ſupreme delight,
And everlaſting love."

5. They frequently die rejoicing in the bleſſed proſpect of eternity. This is not the experience of all. Some of the followers of Chriſt have ſevere conflicts to paſs through in their lateſt moments. Bodily afflictions ſink their ſpirits. Strong temptations attack their minds. The overflowings of ſenſible comfort are withheld. Their fears may be awakened, and they may imagine that the Lord will caſt them off for ever. This has been the experience of thouſands, whoſe lives have ornamented their profeſſion for a number of years. It would be extremely illiberal in us to pronounce, That none are admitted to the right hand of God, but thoſe who die in the triumph of faith. Such a raſh aſſertion would doom to hell a vaſt number of the followers of Chriſt, who left this world much as their Divine Maſter expired on the croſs. They cried out in their trouble, and were exceedingly affected, becauſe their minds were not particularly comforted. If in the agony of dying they exclaimed, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" It would be wrong in us to conclude, that they were caſt off, becauſe they could never bear teſtimony that the Lord had graciouſly returned to them in his ſenſible comforts and love. After our gracious Redeemer made uſe of the words above quoted, we never read of his having comfortable manifeſtations of the preſence of God, before he cried out, "It is finiſhed, and gave up the ghoſt." It would be blaſphemous in us to declare, becauſe he died in this way, that he was caſt off from the Father for ever. Let us then be careful how we pronounce upon others, leſt, by raſh judgment, we ſhould contract guilt upon our conſcience.

Yet it is the lot of many of the followers of Chriſt, to leave this world rejoicing in the proſpect that opens to their view. Like Stephen, the heavens appear to open to

them. They behold the Lord Jeſus ready to receive them. And rejoice in the proſpect of appearing before him, prepared as a bride for her huſband. They have been able to witneſs a good confeſſion before many. Like good old Simeon, they have cried out, "Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation, which thou haſt prepared before the face of all people." Let us ever remember, whether we have a triumphant death, or a ſevere conflict in the agony of dying, if we are only found in Chriſt, without ſpot and blameleſs, we ſhall be happy through the ages of eternity.

II. Let us now conſider the bleſſedneſs of their ſtate.—They reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them. In theſe two declarations is ſummed up the happineſs of the death of the righteous.

They reſt from their labours. From all bodily exerciſes. Many of the followers of Chriſt are obliged to riſe early, and late take reſt, labouring hard every day for the bread that periſhes. They are ſo harraſſed in buſineſs, that they ſcarcely can ſpare time to accompliſh the duties which the ſcriptures require of them. Many times they are ſo fatigued with the exerciſes they are called to paſs through, that they are oliged to be abſent from the worſhip of God, when their ſpirit would willingly attend, but the body is worn out with hard labour, and muſt have reſt. Six days in the week are they obliged to purſue this plan, otherwiſe they could not provide for their families. Were they to ſlacken their hand in buſineſs, to give themſelves to more religious duties, they would neglect their partners and children, and conſequently deny the faith, and be worſe than Infidels. In the preſent diſordered ſtate of things, thouſands are daily labouring beyond their ſtrength, merely to ſupport a wretched exiſtence upon earth; while multitudes are living in idleneſs, indulging themſelves with every thing their hearts can deſire. When death cloſes our eyes we ſhall ceaſe from all manual labour: the hours we ſpent in it will be employed by us (if we die in the Lord) in adoring God and the Lamb. Oh! how the ſouls of the laborious poor, and thoſe that have been daily harraſſed in buſineſs, will triumph, when they are freed from their bodily chain, and have done with the ſervices of life!

2. They

2. They reſt from the labours of the mind, as they refer to the things of this life: The mind is often called from better ſubjects to meditate on what is neceſſary to be attended to in this life. If we have a family to provide for—a buſineſs to purſue—a place to fill up in the church or the world to the glory of God, our minds are frequently called to attend particularly to our affairs and ſituation. We too often find our thoughts taken up with theſe things in our cloſet, in the duties of our family, in ſocial religion, and in public worſhip. If a perſon obtain grace to leave the thoughts of the world behind, while he is engaged in religious exerciſes, yet how much he is obliged to ſtudy and contrive the beſt mode of acting, in the things that belong to his ſituation. It frequently happens, that the labours of the mind are more painful, than bodily exerciſe. Eſpecially when a vaſt number of concerns reſt on one perſon. But when death releaſes us from this bodily chain, the world will occupy our thoughts no more for ever. We ſhall have our whole ſouls loſt in heavenly meditations and ſpiritual exerciſes: To have our mind releaſed from every thing that agitates it here, and all our ſoul at liberty to attend only on God, will be a glorious releaſe. This will be our experience, if we die in the Lord.

3. They reſt from all the diſorders and infirmities incident to human life. Many are the afflictions of the righteous in this world: Thouſands of the followers of the Son of God are frequently choſen in the furnace of affliction.—Many diſeaſes are exceedingly oppreſſive: they are a burden that can ſcarcely be ſupported. Many have a ſore travel and conflict with the infirmities and diſorders which belong to their lot. Weariſome nights, and troubleſome days are appointed for them; they are obliged to toſs to and fro upon their beds, ſeeking reſt, but cannot find it.—While others are bleſſed with health to purſue their buſineſs, they are laid on beds of languiſhing. While many of the followers of Chriſt have ſtrength to attend upon the ordinances of God, they are confined in their own habitations. If many had nothing to grapple with but the infirmities of a weak conſtitution, or of old age, theſe are frequently hard to bear; they cauſe thoſe that ſuſtain them to go on ſoftly in the bitterneſs of their trouble. None can deſcribe the ſore labour and diſtreſs which perſons are called to paſs through, that are ſubject to diſeaſe and infirmities. But

when death comes, they will be releaſed from their bodily chain. All the afflictions of life will be ended. Nothing ſhall diſquiet or perplex them again for ever. The happy ſpirit releaſed from its impriſoned ſtate, will never be a companion again to frail mortality. The body ſown in corruption, ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and be a ſuitable companion for the immortal ſpirit through the ages of eternity. Let us then look forward to that glorious ſeaſon when mortality ſhall be ſwallowed up of life.

4. The righteous reſt from all the exerciſes which are occaſioned by the adverſary of mankind. The prince of the power of the air goes about as a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour. He attacks the followers of Chriſt on every ſide. Unleſs they reſiſt him ſtedfaſtly in the faith, they will be overcome. It often happens, that what he cannot accompliſh by violence, he attempts by ſtratagem. He lays ſnares for the ſouls which he ſeeks to entangle. He is unwearied in his efforts to deſtroy. It is impoſſible to deſcribe the methods he purſues to ruin thoſe, who ſeek to glorify God. Hence a life devoted to religion is called a warfare. Every ſoldier of Chriſt muſt fight his way through. He has ſnares to ſhun, and open violence to encounter. He muſt either conquer or loſe his ſoul. When the conflicts have been numerous, and on certain occaſions, victory appeared uncertain, we muſt hold ourſelves in readineſs to go forth to the war again, when our enemies renew their attacks. Perhaps there is ſcarcely a day in our life but we muſt be wreſtling with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, and with wicked ſpirits in high places. They will harraſs us with ſtrong temptations in our cloſet, in the duties of the family, in the church, and in the world. But if we have the whole armour of God upon us, it will be poſſible to go on from conquering to conquer. We ſhall be able in the ſtrength of Jehovah, to gain the conqueſt, and to put to flight all that are ſeeking our ruin.

But when death receives his commiſſion, he diſcharges us from this war. All the conflicts we have experienced are then ended. How happy are they, who have nothing to do with temptation, but are out of the reach of the grand deceiver of the brethren! They have done with all their ſpiritual armour, and are crowned in the preſence of God! They bear palms of victory in their hands, and triumph over all

all their enemies! They ſhall never be called to put on their armour again, but ſhall have to ſing the ſong of Moſes, and of the Lamb, world without end!

5. They reſt from all the labours occaſioned by wicked and unreaſonable men. It is very difficult to keep a conſcience void of offence towards men, as well as towards God. The perſons we are called to ſpend moſt of our time with, may be daily laying ſnares for our ſouls. When we have to tranſact buſineſs with ſinners, they will do every thing in their power to lead us from God. They will uſe every ſcheme they can deviſe, to entice us to ſin. And if apparent kindneſs will not allure us into their ſnare, they will try what violence will do. They will attempt to compel us to join with them in many things forbidden in the ſcriptures. If they cannot prevail on us to act contrary to the goſpel, many of them will revile, reproach, and ſay all manner of evil of us. They will ſeek to injure us in our character, our family, or our buſineſs. If they cannot ſucceed at firſt, they will be unwearied in their efforts to prevent our happineſs. Unleſs we poſſeſs the wiſdom of the ſerpent, and are harmleſs as doves, it will not be eaſy to proſper. Except the mighty power of the God of Jacob ſurround us, we ſhall be entangled and brought into bondage. We are commanded to watch unto prayer, that we may be kept unſpotted from the world. We are charged to come out from among the ungodly and be ſeparate.—— We are to have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs.—We are neither to touch, nor taſte, nor handle the things which the Lord has forbidden.—The maxims and faſhions of the world are to be conquered.—Theſe duties cannot be accompliſhed without much exerciſe. Many are the labours which a chriſtian experiences from this quarter. But when death has done his office we ſhall be taken, where the wicked ceaſe to trouble, and where the weary ſhall be for ever at reſt. No ſinner can diſturb the repoſe of thoſe that ſleep in Jeſus. They ſhall be,

> "Far from a world of grief and ſin,
> With God eternally ſhut in."

It will be an amazing change to them. What a glorious releaſe will immediately ſucceed this painful conflict! The inhabitants are all righteous in that glorious place. Not a temptation

temptation ſhall be preſented before the bleſſed in heaven, through the ages of eternity. They ſhall be ſcreened as in the hollow of his hand. And know war no more for ever.

6. Many exerciſes are occaſioned to the followers of Chriſt while they are in this world, by weak or falſe brethren. Many are weak in the faith. They are unſtable as water. Soon lifted up above meaſure, or caſt down beyond the bounds of moderation. You never can have any hold of them. It is not ſafe to place any particular confidence in them. They occaſion themſelves a great deal of trouble, and cauſe the ſincere followers of Chriſt a number of exerciſes on their account. They endeavour to lead them into the good and right way. To direct them to Chriſt, where they may obtain eſtabliſhment in the truth. They watch over them for good continually, and are exceedingly deſirous of being of ſervice to them, in their way to heaven. They ſpare no labour to get them fixed, if poſſible, on the rock of eternal ages.

They have alſo to do with falſe brethren. Perſons that pretend to religion, who have not the root of the matter in them. They have a name to live, but are dead while alive. Some baſe ends are the object of their purſuit. If this be concealed for a ſeaſon, it will be diſcovered ſooner or later. When their hypocriſy is manifeſt, the followers of Chriſt have a number of things to encounter, to prevent their deſigns, and to have them ſeparated from their community. It often happens, that perſons of this deſcription become the moſt violent perſecutors that the church has to grapple with. When their baſe ends cannot be accompliſhed and their hypocriſy is expoſed, they are enraged, and ſtudy to injure the very men that have been ſeeking their ſalvation. They will join any party to oppoſe and perſecute: and they often appear more zealous in this diabolical work, than thoſe who never profeſſed any religion. Many are the exerciſes which they occaſion the followers of Chriſt. When they have finiſhed their courſe on earth, every labour of this nature will be ended for ever. Weak brethren will not perplex them there. There will be no feeble ſouls in the thouſands that are found at God's right hand. Hypocrites or falſe brethren, ſhall have no place in the New Jeruſalem. They will not be admitted to perplex them again.

again. Every exerciſe they occaſioned them on earth ſhall be ended, and their ſouls completely delivered from their rage.

7. From all the outward exerciſes of religion, which are commanded in the ſcriptures, and muſt be attended to while we are in this wilderneſs. We are commanded to work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling.—To ſtrive to make our calling and election ſure.—To ſeek to be found in Chriſt without ſpot and blameleſs.—We are to watch and pray.—To wait upon God in his ordinances.—To glorify him in our bodies and ſpirits which are his. Theſe, and other duties equally binding, require much attention. It is impoſſible to neglect them with a good conſcience. The ſpirit is frequently willing, but the fleſh is weak. We have to conquer the backwardneſs of our own hearts, and are obliged to uſe violence with ourſelves to accompliſh the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Every day brings new ſervices with it. And were we to grow cold and indifferent, we ſhould be in danger of loſing our ſouls. We cannot with ſafety ſlacken our hand, till we have finiſhed the work which the Lord has given us to do. We muſt forget the things that are behind, and reach to the things which are before, preſſing toward the mark, for the prize of our high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus. But when death frees us from our bodily chain, we ſhall have done with every religious exerciſe that belongs to this life. Attending upon the means of grace—Watching and prayer—Striving to be found in Chriſt, &c. &c. &c. will then all be ended. A glorious change will take place, and the righteous will be employed in praiſing God and the Lamb for ever and ever.

Whatever can be called a labour, or whatever is an exerciſe to the mind, and is attended with circumſtances that occaſion any diſtreſs, ſhall all have an end at death. The chriſtian ſhall reſt from all the labours that belong to his pilgrimage through this wilderneſs. All his conflicts will be ended. He ſhall have nothing to vex or perplex him in heaven. The reſt he will obtain cannot be deſcribed. His ſoul ſhall be loſt and ſwallowed up in God. His tranquillity and happineſs, in that bleſſed ſtate, will be of ſuch a nature, that it will fill him with wonder, love, and praiſe, for ever.

They

They reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them. Good works do not go before, to open the gate of heaven to us. We are ſaved by grace, through faith. Not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but by his mercy he ſaves us. Jeſus Chriſt has paſſed into the holy of holies to appear before God in our behalf. He has opened a new and living way to eternal happineſs. He is preparing manſions, in the heavens, for his people. The gate that admits believers into the New Jeruſalem, is only acceſſible by his blood. We muſt be admitted into the joy of our Lord by his undertaking, or never be made partakers of it. The ſcriptures exclude works from any merit before God. They clearly affirm, that Jeſus Chriſt alone can ſave. That we muſt receive eternal life as a free gift. We muſt have a place at God's right hand, without money or price. Works are entirely excluded in this matter. They cannot ſave us either in whole or in part.

Yet notwithſtanding this is the caſe, the ſcriptures ſtrictly enjoin, that he who has believed, ſhould be careful to maintain good works. Every chriſtian is called upon to ſhow the truth of his faith, by ſuitable works. If a man profeſs that he is a chriſtian, and his actions do not correſpond with his profeſſion, he deceives his own ſoul, and ſtrives to impoſe upon others. Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit. We a e commanded to add to our faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godlineſs, to godlineſs brotherly kindneſs, and to brotherly kindneſs charity. The apoſtle declares, if theſe things are in us and abound, they will make us that we ſhall be neither barren nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Good works are the fruit of faith. If we really poſſeſs the vital power of godlineſs in our own ſouls, our life and converſation will teſtify that we have not believed in vain. St. Paul charges us to be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. In another place, he ſays, "Ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and your end everlaſting life." The ſcriptures are ſo particular and expreſs on this head, that it appears amazingly ſtrange, how any profeſſors of religion ſhould imagine, that true faith, working by love in the heart, ſhould admit of a life contrary to the goſpel of God our Saviour. Thoſe that truly believe, muſt be careful

ful to maintain good works. It is our duty to glorify God in our bodies and ſpirits which are his.

If our works are not admitted to go before to prepare us a place in heaven, our text informs us they will follow. Every ſervice we perform by the faith of the holy Spirit, according to the divine will, ſhall not loſe its reward. All works of piety towards God; all works of ſelf-denial and mortification towards ourſelves; all works of brotherly-love and tenderneſs towards our chriſtian brethren; every act of mercy or charity, ſhall have a gracious reward. Not ſo much as a cup of cold water can be given to a diſciple of Chriſt's, in the name of the Lord, but what ſhall be thought of by him, and rewarded in due time. He that has ſown plentifully for eternity in this life, ſhall reap plentifully. He that has endeavoured to glorify God in his body and ſpirit, and alſo with his ſubſtance, ſhall meet with a glorious entrance into the kingdom of heaven, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant, and none of his works ſhall be forgotten. It is impoſſible to much as to imagine, what the Lord has prepared for his people in the world of ſpirits. Eye hath not ſeen, ear hath not heard, what God has laid up for thoſe that love him.

If we could get to heaven in any reſpect by the merit of our works, it would be a loſs to us. We ſhould have heaven then in part as a purchaſe. But now we receive it as a free gift from God; and, inſtead of any of our ſervices going before to procure us a place there, they will all follow us to that celeſtial place. This thought ſhould lead us to adore the God of our mercies, for providing ſo richly for our future happineſs in Chriſt, and for aſſuring us that every work of faith, and labour of love, ſhall be rewarded in glory for ever.

1. Having made theſe remarks on the paſſage, ſuffer me to entreat you, my dear brethren, to examine your own hearts before God. Except we are brought to know that we are united to him by the faith of his Spirit, we cannot be happy. Unleſs we know that we have a living union with Chriſt, our living head, we cannot proſper in the things that make for our peace. We muſt be brought unto him, and have communications of his grace to our hearts, otherwiſe we ſhall always be in danger. Should death find us before we are intereſted in the Son of God, the ſcriptures aſſure us, where he is we cannot be admitted. The gate

of

of heaven is only open to believers. Without are all kinds of ſinners, who would not have Chriſt to reign over them. They muſt be caſt off from God, and from the glory of his power, world without end.

2. If we are brought into the glorious liberty of the goſpel, let us hold faſt the beginning of our confidence without wavering to the end. The place that now knows us, will ſoon know us no more for ever. We ought to give diligence to be found in Chriſt without ſpot and blameleſs. Should we be found trifling when death comes, we ſhall have to repent of our conduct. But if we make it the buſineſs of our life, to follow the Lord Jeſus in the regeneration, we ſhall have the anſwer of a good conſcience, and a lively hope of eternal happineſs. By patient continuance in well doing, let us ſeek for glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. Let us conſider one another, and provoke unto love and good works. Let us ever remember, that this is not our reſt, but that we are haſtening through this wilderneſs, to the promiſed land. If we endure hardneſs as good ſoldiers of Chriſt, we ſhall find the advantage of it, when we have done with the things that are ſeen. Should we conſtantly watch unto prayer, that we may be kept unſpotted from the world; ſhould we ever be haſtening to accompliſh the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; ſhould we purſue our engagements in life with a ſingle eye to the glory of God, ever keeping eternal things in view, while we are paſſing through the temporal concerns of life, the God of peace will abundantly bleſs us. He will cauſe the light of his countenance to ſhine upon us. We ſhall feel the conſolations of his Holy Spirit abounding to us in Chriſt Jeſus, and our hearts will exceedingly rejoice in his love. The proſpect of death will not be painful. We ſhall look beyond the vail of tears to the holy hill of Zion, and triumph in the proſpect of the great things which will be conferred upon us when our conflicts are ended.

3. May the God of our mercies releaſe us all from the bondage of corruption, and bring us into the liberty of his children! May he impart to each of us that faith which works by love, and purifies the heart! May he powerfully aſſiſt us by his Spirit, that we may chearfully do and ſuffer his will on earth, ſeeking his glory in every thing we take in hand! May he help us to take up our croſs,

deny

deny ourſelves, and follow him fully all our days! May he enable us to grow up into Chriſt our living head in all things; that we, increaſing with the increaſe of God, may be fully prepared for our great change! May he ſtrengthen us to meet death with chriſtian fortitude; that when we are called to paſs through the dreary valley, we may fear no evil, but find our ſpirits borne up in the agony of dying! When we are called to quit this mournful vale, may the God of our mercies receive us to ſhare with the bleſſed, in the inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away! And may he lead us to living fountains of water, that we may have to triumph in his preſence, and to caſt our crowns before him, while we adore Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for ever and ever!— God grant us theſe mercies, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, our only Redeemer! Amen.

END OF THE SECOND SERMON.

A SERMON,

Preached at MOSLEY, near ASHTON,

The ſame Evening that

Mrs. Sarah Kilham

WAS BURIED,

From Hebrews ix. 27.

It is appointed unto Men once to die, but after this the Judgment.

IN this chapter St. Paul endeavours to ſhow the difference between the law and the goſpel. Under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, the High Prieſt was obliged once in the year to appear before God in the holy of holies, to ſprinkle the mercy-ſeat with the blood of the ſacrifices. He was commanded of God to renew the ceremony every year, to put the Jews in remembrance of their ſtate, and to typify the ſufferings of the Son of God. Almoſt every thing under the law was purged with blood; and without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion. The apoſtle ſays, "It was therefore neceſſary that the pattern of the things in heaven ſhould be purified with theſe; but the heavenly things with better ſacrifices. For Chriſt is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itſelf, now to appear in the preſence of God for us. Nor yet that he ſhould offer himſelf often, as the High Prieſt entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others." In theſe words we clearly perceive, how infinitely ſuperior the Lord Jeſus was to any that officiated under the diſpenſation of Moſes. It behoved the Jews to purify the pattern of heavenly things by the blood of

of their ſacrifices, but things of a ſuperior nature muſt be purified by better ſacrifices.

If Chriſt had been like the High Prieſt under the law, "Then he muſt have often ſuffered ſince the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf. And as it is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment; ſo Chriſt was once offered to bear the ſins of many; and unto them that look for him ſhall he appear the ſecond time without ſin unto ſalvation." Having once ſuffered for ſin, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God, he will no more appear as a Man of Sorrows, to offer himſelf a ſecond time for the ſins of the people, but when he appears again in the clouds of heaven, it will be without a ſin-offering, unto the complete ſalvation of all that believe in him.

Though the words of our text are only introduced to illuſtrate the ſubject which St. Paul was writing upon, yet they contain a truth that ſhould be frequently conſidered by us all.

In conſidering this paſſage, I ſhall firſt call your attention to the appointment of God, reſpecting our death and future judgment. And then, Secondly, endeavour to ſhow the difference between the righteous and wicked, both at death and at the ſolemn tribunal of the Judge of quick and dead. As the ſubject is very important, let us plead with God to grant us the help of his Spirit, that we may be enabled rightly to divide the word of truth. If we intreat him in his great mercy to meet with us at this time, we ſhall be favoured with an anſwer to our feeble requeſts, and our worſhip will be both acceptable to God, and a bleſſing to ourſelves.

I. Let us conſider the appointment of God, as it refers to our death, and future judgment.

1. When God formed man out of the duſt of the earth, and breathed into him the breath of life, he was poſſeſſed of every thing his heart could wiſh for, in the Garden of Paradiſe. He had no corruption in his nature, nor any inclination to any thing that was evil. He was holy, harmleſs, and undefiled before God. It was his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father. He was conſtantly engaged in ſuch ſervices as were pleaſing to the Almighty.—

He knew no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Had he ſtood in that bleſſed ſtate, death never would have come near him. It is probable, after he had continued enjoying God and glorifying his name, he would have increaſed in holineſs and conformity to his Maker. And after he had continued a ſuitable time in the garden of Eden, he might have been tranſlated into a more glorious ſtate, and been bleſſed with greater advantages. The God of his mercies might have taken him near to his throne, and given him every bleſſing his exalted nature would have been capable of enjoying.

But the ſcriptures inform us, by the ſubtilty of the grand adverſary, making uſe of the wiſdom of the ſerpent, our firſt parents were prevailed upon to eat of the fruit which God had forbidden. And through their diſobedience, death entered into the world. They loſt that union with God which they had formerly enjoyed, which brought ſpiritual death into their ſoul. By their tranſgreſſion they became mortal; ſubject to infirmities and natural death.—— And at the ſame time expoſed themſelves to the pains of the ſecond death. This is a ſubject greatly enlarged upon by many of the ſacred writers. They ſpeak of it under different views, and ſhow us the awful ſtate we are brought into through the fall.

2. The ſolemn decree paſſed ſoon after ſin entered into the world: "Duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return." Or as it is expreſſed in our text, "It is appointed to men once to die." Before the flood many lived to a very great age. They were continued for a long ſeaſon, that the earth might be peopled, and well ſupplied with inhabitants. But after many of them had lived more than nine hundred years, death arreſted them. Their hiſtory, after relating their birth and age, with a few particulars of their life, concludes, "And he died." The place they had ſo long poſſeſſed in this world, knew them no more for ever. What the poet expreſſes on another ſubject, was applicable to them:

"All ends in—Here he lies."

In the Old and New Teſtament, we only read of two perſons that eſcaped from this world without ſeeing death. After Enoch had walked with God, and glorified him in his body and ſpirit, he was tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee death.

After

After Elijah had filled up a place in the Jewiſh church to the honour of his profeſſion, and had paſſed through a great number of hardſhips on account of his faithfulneſs in warning his countrymen, he alſo was tranſlated. Death had no dominion over either of them. It is probable, the ſame change was wrought in them, which will be wrought in the ſaints, when the Lord Jeſus appears to reign with his ſaints. St. Paul ſays, "And we which are alive ſhall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an an eye: and be caught up to meet the Lord in the air." What thouſands of millions has the king of terrors removed from the face of the earth! Our fathers, where are they? And the generations of old, into what place have they entered? Though ſo many millions have fallen beneath his influence, he ſtill is daily hurrying thouſands out of time into eternity. He ſeems determined to continue his efforts, while his reign ſhall continue.

3. Death is a king that bids defiance to all. Old and young; rich and poor; male and female, muſt bid adieu to their friends, when he has received his commiſſion.—— He is ſtronger than all the efforts that are made againſt him. If the afflicted unto death be in circumſtances to call in phyſicians without number; and if he ſuppoſe in the midſt of a multitude of counſellors, on his caſe, there is ſafety, what are all their efforts againſt this voracious conqueror? Will their wiſdom out-wit him in his attacks? Will their efforts prevent him from giving the fatal blow? If they collect medicine from all parts of the globe, and compound them with all the art and ſkill they poſſeſs, will this ſtay his hand, and be an hedge about the afflicted, to preſerve from his ſhafts? Can they ſet bounds to him, and then ſay, "Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no farther; here ſhall thy proud waves be ſtayed?"— Should they call in the help of the beſt miniſters under heaven, and endeavour to ward off the ſtroke of death by a multitude of prayers, would theſe ſcreen the object doomed to die? Would they prevent the king of terrors from executing his commiſſion, when the time is come to remove the living to the ſilent grave? Does he not laugh at the vain efforts of mortals to ſtay his hand, and defy their united ſkill and influence? Will he not break through every barrier, and arreſt the priſoner in the midſt of ſurrounding friends?

4. He generally ſends his harbingers to proclaim his approach. Yet he often comes ſuddenly to many, who expected both riches and length of days. Plague, peſtilence, famine, and war, are awful harbingers of death. When theſe appear, death is near to myriads. When theſe harbingers go forth, it is in general a certain ſign of thouſands upon thouſands being on the brink of eternity. A number of diſorders that prevail are alſo the harbingers of death to individuals. When affliction ſeizes the body, we ſhould remember death is on his way. And ſhould our troubles be removed, and our life be given to us a few years for a prey, we ſhould not forget that we are mortal; nor that death may ſuddenly arreſt us afterwards. The infirmities of old age, as well as a number of lingering diſeaſes, are the ſure harbingers of death. If we attend to their voice, and improve the privilege of the timely notice they afford us, infinite good may be the conſequence. But ſhould we be deaf to their warning, we may have to repent, when it will be of no ſervice to us.

Death, however, frequently comes as a thief in the night. He ſeizes thouſands in a moment, and hurries them out of time into eternity. How often the public papers inform us of ſudden fires or accidents, which deſtroy a number of our fellow creatures! Many go well from their habitation in a morning, but are brought dead to their families before the evening ſhades return. Thouſands have gone healthy to ſeek reſt in ſleep at night, and have been found dead in the morning. Many have ſat down to eat the bread that periſhes, and while they have been thus engaged, their ſpirit has been required at their hands. We may truly ſay, "In the midſt of life, we are in death—We walk on ſnares and death whereever we go." It is obſerved by ſome, that an object ever preſſing upon our view, ſoon becomes familiar; and though exceedingly alarming at firſt, may become leſs dreaded, though equally dangerous. Is there any thing more alarming than ſudden death? Can any thing be more awful than for a man to be ſnatched from his friends in a moment, and be numbered with the dead? If we ſhould only hear of this once in our life, would it not make our ears tingle? If we were only to be privy to one inſtance, would it not ſeize our heart with terror? But the frequency of ſudden death has made it familiar to us. So many accounts reach us in the courſe of a year of this nature,

ture, that we loſe our dread for this kind of exit into eternity: And becauſe we have ſeen ſo many inſtances ourſelves, we are not affected with the ſubject. But are we any ſafer becauſe ſudden or natural death is become an object of indifferency to us? Ought we not to be alarmed at the thought of dying unprepared for a better world?—Dr. Watts obſerves, there is ſomething awful in ſudden death even to believers. He thinks it would be highly advantageous to them, to have ſome little notice of their approaching diſſolution, that they might trim their lamps, and prepare for their heavenly bridegroom. If ſudden death have ſomething in it alarming to the followers of Chriſt, ought it not to awaken the fears of ſinners? And ought we not all to conſider, that the Lord may permit this kind of death to be our lot?

5. Many of you have ſeen emblematical figures of death, with a dart in his hand. In thoſe prints he is generally, if not always repreſented without eyes, without ears, and without bowels. He has no eyes to ſee the diſtreſs he will bring into a family, by removing the head of it. He does not ſee the wretched ſtate the fatherleſs and widow will be plunged into by his means. If a beloved child languiſh under his hand, or an affectionate wife, he does not ſee the anguiſh he will plunge the ſurvivors into, by tearing from their embrace, thoſe that are dearer to them than life itſelf. Whatever miſeries he brings upon individuals, upon families, or ſociety, by removing thoſe that have been uſeful in life, he is blind to them all. If he be intreated to ſtay his hand, and ſpare thoſe that he levels his dart againſt, he has no ears to attend to their ſupplications. Should the whole family together, with all that live in the neighbourhood, join in their application to him, he would be deaf to all their intreaties. When the prieſts of Baal cried mightily to their idol, to hear and deliver, he did not hear, and therefore he could not anſwer. Were we to purſue the ſame meaſures with the king of terrors, no anſwer would be given, were we ever ſo earneſt in our application. He has no bowels of compaſſion to yearn over the diſtreſſed. Some tyrants have been moved to pity the wretched in their diſtreſs. Though they have in general delighted in blood, yet it has been remarked, on certain occaſions, there have been faint diſcoveries of humanity left in them. But death has never been known to relent. He delights in ſlaughter and blood.

He

He never has been known to pity a ſingle individual, when his commiſſion was ſealed. It is in vain to attempt to affect him by alarming repreſentations of the miſeries which he will occaſion, ſhould he perſiſt in his deſign. We read of a great man, brought to the brink of death, under fearful apprehenſions of future miſery, who offered, if I miſtake not, thirty thouſand pounds for an hour's life—But his offer would not be accepted. There is no bribing death with gold and ſilver. He cannot be enriched by them, or receive any advantage through their influence. We may fix it in our hearts, that he will be inflexible in his purpoſe, if once he is commiſſioned of God to remove us from among the living.

6. After death the judgment. Some perſons have ſuppoſed, that the ſouls of the righteous and wicked both appear before God, as ſoon as they quit this world, and are appointed to their different places by his judgment. Hades, or the world of ſpirits, is conſidered as the place where both good and evil ſpirits are to abide. Only that part called Paradiſe, or Abraham's boſom, where the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, are as happy and ſatisfied as it is poſſible for them to be, in their preſent ſtate, has no connection with the regions of darkneſs and deſpair. The ſpirits of the righteous look forward to the morning of the reſurrection, when the body, ſown in corruption, ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and be united to their glorified ſpirits, to be completely happy for ever. The wicked are confined in a moſt wretched ſituation, under great torture and miſery, till the Lord Jeſus ſhall come to judge the world in righteouſneſs. We may have a thouſand conjectures of the ſtate of the righteous and wicked, till the day of judgment. The ſcriptures in this are our infallible guide. If we advert to them, we ſhall learn what the living Jehovah ſays on the ſubject. They inform us, that juſt men made perfect will enter into the joy of their Lord, immediately after death. They will be admitted, where the wicked ſhall ceaſe to trouble, and where the weary ſhall be for ever at reſt. On the other hand, all that die in their ſin, where Chriſt is they can never come. They will be caſt off from God, and from the glory of his power for ever.

But whatever judgment takes place at death, we are aſſured, there is a day approaching in which God will judge the ſecrets of all hearts by Chriſt Jeſus. All nations will

will be ſummoned to his bar, and have to anſwer for the deeds done in the body. We have many declarations in the ſacred pages of the great things which will be acccompliſhed at that ſolemn event. The ſun ſhall be turned into darkneſs, and the moon into blood. The ſtars will fall from their orbits, while the elements melt with fervent heat. The trump of God will ſound through all nations, and the dead, ſmall and great, will have to appear before him that will judge righteouſly.—But as we ſhall have to ſpeak more particularly on this ſubject in a little while, I haſten to the ſecond part of the ſubject.

II. That is, to ſhew the difference there is between the righteous and wicked in their death, and will be hereafter at the bar of God.

1. There is a vaſt difference in their experience. A good man has been led to confeſs and forſake his ſin. To ſeek redemption in the Lord Jeſus. He has obtained by the faith of Chriſt, life from the dead. His heart is converted to God. He is born again of the Spirit. Old things are paſſed away, behold all things are become new in his experience! He feels living faith, working by love, purifying his heart. He enjoys the benefits of true religion, and goes on his way rejoicing in the God of his ſalvation. But a ſinner is hardened in the midſt of his crimes. He cleaves to the ways of the deſtroyer with all his heart. He continues to follow the maxims and faſhions of the world. Inſtead of ſeeking mercy and ſalvation in Chriſt, he ſpurns the offers of the goſpel, and is deaf to the voice of the Lord. No converſion of heart, or new-birth unto righteouſneſs is experienced by him, but rather an increaſe in impurity and unholineſs. A guilty conſcience vexes his ſoul, and cauſes him to experience many ſorrows. He often feels his heart ſad in the midſt of laughter: And many times is wretched while he attempts to make thoſe around him believe that he is happy, It may be truly ſaid, every man in this ſtate, is in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity. He is far from God, and far from righteouſneſs. An alien from the commonwealth of Iſrael and a ſtranger to the covenant of promiſe.

2. If we are the followers of Chriſt, it is the buſineſs of our life, to ſeek to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jeſus. We are conſcious, that we have not yet attained all that is promiſed in the ſcriptures. There are

a

and pray againſt anxiety on this head. If they were to give place to the feelings of their own heart, they ſhould murmur at their Lord's delay. They ſeek patience and reſignation to his will in this matter, and wiſh that he would deal with them in all things, as infinite wiſdom directs. This is not, however, the experience of the ungodly. If the thoughts of death are painful, they cannot be ſuppoſed to deſire a diſcharge from this war. If a converſation of death and judgment at a funeral, or when they are afflicted, be ſo very painful, can we ſuppoſe that a ſingle wiſh is ever found in their heart to leave this world? They dread death above all things. They cannot bear the thought of leaving the things that are ſeen. As their treaſures are here, ſo their hearts and affections are here alſo. Their friends and relations, their lands and poſſeſſions, their companions and ſins, or the cuſtoms and maxims of this world, are the object of their deſires. Theſe are the idols to which they daily bow. Their whole ſoul is engroſſed with them. It is like death itſelf to reflect on being ſeparated from them. When any proſpect opens of having them removed, or of being removed from them, they are filled with ſorrow, and go on ſoftly in the bitterneſs of their heart. They cannot be pacified, unleſs their minds are fully perſuaded that their idols ſhall be preſerved to them.

5. In the thoughts and deſires of death, which the followers of Chriſt experience, they find their minds quickened to purſue their way to eternal life. Convinced by the ſcriptures, that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord; and that the pure in heart ſhall only inherit the New Jeruſalem, they give diligence to be found in Chriſt without ſpot and blameleſs. It is the buſineſs of their life to prepare to meet God. They earneſtly intreat the Lord to change them into his own image, from glory to glory, that when it is their lot to die, they may be found meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light. They trim their lamps, and prepare to meet the bridegroom of their ſouls. An holy chearfulneſs poſſeſſes their minds, while they ſeek to be found, not having on their own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but the righteouſneſs which is of God, by the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Is this the conduct of thoſe who live without hope, and without God in the world? Are they not daily living in the neglect of every duty

duty which the ſcriptures enjoin? Do they not lead a reprobate life in the preſence of all that are around them? Do they not ſpurn the offers of the goſpel, and caſt the fear of the Lord behind their back? Are they not haſtening as faſt as poſſible to the regions of deſpair? Does it not appear to be their daily care to treaſure up wrath, againſt the day of wrath? In afflictions and death itſelf, do they not continue to harden their hearts, and to deſpiſe the offers of their God? Is it not evident that multitudes determine to hold it out againſt the Lord their God, even to the laſt? The minds of the followers of Chriſt, are greatly affected in viſiting perſons of this deſcription in their troubles. They frequently grieve on their account, and beſeech the Lord in his great mercy to ſave them.

6. The followers of Chriſt are enabled to ſpeak comfortably to their friends on their death bed. If any of their deareſt relations weep and mourn at the proſpect of their departure, they cry out, "Weep not for us, weep for yourſelves." We are aſſured, that "When this earthly houſe, our tabernacle is diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternally in the heavens." They declare what God has done for, and what he has wrought in them by the power of his Spirit. Their chriſtian brethren are frequently edified and bleſſed in viſiting them in their trouble. They will venture to warn ſinners that come into their preſence, to fly from the wrath to come. Their own relations and friends will be intereſted peculiarly in their dying exhortations and prayers. To their partners and children they will give the beſt advice they can adminiſter. If their former exhortations have been ſlighted, they will renew them with greater fervour. They will charge them in the name of the Lord Jeſus, not to trifle any longer, but immediately to lay to heart the things which belong to their peace. They will warn them not to deſpiſe their dying counſel, leſt they ſhould appear as ſwift witneſſes againſt them at the bar of God. All their care is to leave a good ſavour of Chriſt behind them upon all that belong to their houſe, or that come near them. —But how different is the ſtate of the ungodly, when their ſoul is required at their hand. If their conſcience be aſleep or ſeared; if they have a deluſive hope and a falſe peace, they will expreſs many things on their death bed, which ſufficiently prove, that they are unfit for a place at the right

and pray againſt anxiety on this head. If they were to give place to the feelings of their own heart, they ſhould murmur at their Lord's delay. They ſeek patience and reſignation to his will in this matter, and wiſh that he would deal with them in all things, as infinite wiſdom directs. This is not, however, the experience of the ungodly. If the thoughts of death are painful, they cannot be ſuppoſed to deſire a diſcharge from this war. If a converſation of death and judgment at a funeral, or when they are afflicted, be ſo very painful, can we ſuppoſe that a ſingle wiſh is ever found in their heart to leave this world? They dread death above all things. They cannot bear the thought of leaving the things that are ſeen. As their treaſures are here, ſo their hearts and affections are here alſo. Their friends and relations, their lands and poſſeſſions, their companions and ſins, or the cuſtoms and maxims of this world, are the object of their deſires. Theſe are the idols to which they daily bow. Their whole ſoul is engroſſed with them. It is like death itſelf to reflect on being ſeparated from them. When any proſpect opens of having them removed, or of being removed from them, they are filled with ſorrow, and go on ſoftly in the bitterneſs of their heart. They cannot be pacified, unleſs their minds are fully perſuaded that their idols ſhall be preſerved to them.

5. In the thoughts and deſires of death, which the followers of Chriſt experience, they find their minds quickened to purſue their way to eternal life. Convinced by the ſcriptures, that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord; and that the pure in heart ſhall only inherit the New Jeruſalem, they give diligence to be found in Chriſt without ſpot and blameleſs. It is the buſineſs of their life to prepare to meet God. They earneſtly intreat the Lord to change them into his own image, from glory to glory, that when it is their lot to die, they may be found meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light. They trim their lamps, and prepare to meet the bridegroom of their ſouls. An holy chearfulneſs poſſeſſes their minds, while they ſeek to be found, not having on their own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but the righteouſneſs which is of God, by the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Is this the conduct of thoſe who live without hope, and without God in the world? Are they not daily living in the neglect of every duty

duty which the ſcriptures enjoin? Do they not lead a reprobate life in the preſence of all that are around them? Do they not ſpurn the offers of the goſpel, and caſt the fear of the Lord behind their back? Are they not haſtening as faſt as poſſible to the regions of deſpair? Does it not appear to be their daily care to treaſure up wrath, againſt the day of wrath? In afflictions and death itſelf, do they not continue to harden their hearts, and to deſpiſe the offers of their God? Is it not evident that multitudes determine to hold it out againſt the Lord their God, even to the laſt? The minds of the followers of Chriſt, are greatly affected in viſiting perſons of this deſcription in their troubles. They frequently grieve on their account, and beſeech the Lord in his great mercy to ſave them.

6. The followers of Chriſt are enabled to ſpeak comfortably to their friends on their death bed. If any of their deareſt relations weep and mourn at the proſpect of their departure, they cry out, "Weep not for us, weep for yourſelves." We are aſſured, that "When this earthly houſe, our tabernacle is diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternally in the heavens." They declare what God has done for, and what he has wrought in them by the power of his Spirit. Their chriſtian brethren are frequently edified and bleſſed in viſiting them in their trouble. They will venture to warn ſinners that come into their preſence, to fly from the wrath to come. Their own relations and friends will be intereſted peculiarly in their dying exhortations and prayers. To their partners and children they will give the beſt advice they can adminiſter. If their former exhortations have been ſlighted, they will renew them with greater fervour. They will charge them in the name of the Lord Jeſus, not to trifle any longer, but immediately to lay to heart the things which belong to their peace. They will warn them not to deſpiſe their dying counſel, leſt they ſhould appear as ſwift witneſſes againſt them at the bar of God. All their care is to leave a good ſavour of Chriſt behind them upon all that belong to their houſe, or that come near them. —But how different is the ſtate of the ungodly, when their ſoul is required at their hand. If their conſcience be aſleep or ſeared; if they have a deluſive hope and a falſe peace, they will expreſs many things on their death bed, which ſufficiently prove, that they are unfit for a place at the right

hand of God. They will inform their relations, that they have never done any perſon any harm—They have paid every one his own—They have acted honeſtly between man and man—They have not altogether neglected their duty in the hurry of buſineſs, while at other times they have been diligent in attending upon the worſhip of God—They have been as free from ſin as any of their neighbours, and far exceeded many of them in every thing that is good—They have had little failings as well as others, but their attention upon the church and ſacrament, are ſufficient, they hope, to obtain pardon from God.—If on ſome occaſions they have gone a little too far, their charity to the poor, and their readineſs to help any of their neighbours in trouble, will more than over balance any thing that has been amiſs in their conduct.—As for their part they have no fear of death or hell, for God is merciful, and Chriſt has died; therefore any thing that is deficient in them, will be made up before they leave this world.—If their conſciences are truly awake, and they have ſuitable views of their ſtate and danger, their language will be different from the perſons alluded to. In the midſt of their wretchedneſs they may complain of what they have done againſt God, and their own ſoul. Many in this ſtate, will frankly declare, they have ſpurned the offers of divine mercy for a number of years, and have ſinned againſt light and knowledge. They have gone beyond the reach of mercy in their crimes, and have nothing to look for but indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh, at the hands of the Lord. The heavens are as braſs to their prayers. They have not the leaſt hope of being ſaved. Their day of grace is paſt, and now they muſt look with horror to the fiery indignation, which God has provided for all his adverſaries. With ſuch expreſſions as theſe, many have terrified their friends on their death bed; and have been ſo dreadfully ſunk beneath guilt and condemnation, as to leave the world without the leaſt hope of being ſaved.

7. When the followers of Jeſus Chriſt turn their face to the wall, and bid adieu to their friends, they are as a ſhock of corn, fully prepared for the heavenly garner. The angels of God encamp round about them that fear him, at all times. They are near to bear up our feet while we are marching through this wilderneſs. They attend as miniſtering ſpirits, the heirs of ſalvation. It is not poſſible for

us

us to imagine how many kind ſervices they accompliſh in our behalf, while we are on our journey to the heavenly Canaan. We cannot juſtly ſuppoſe that they will forſake us in our death. Could we ſee the inviſible guards that attend the dying ſaint, we ſhould be conſtrained to cry out, "Greater are they that are for him, than all that can oppoſe."

It is ſuppoſed by ſome, that as ſoon as the ſpirit takes its flight from the body, the angels of God attend, to conduct it through the regions of the air, which are conſidered as the place where the god of this world has influence, and that they land it ſafely in Abraham's boſom. Whether this opinion is only founded in the imagination of divines, or is a fact that we may depend on, is not my buſineſs to determine. It is ſufficient for us to know, that the God of Jacob will not forſake us, when our heart and fleſh fail; but will paſs through the valley of the ſhadow of death with us. His rod and his ſtaff ſhall comfort, when human help fails. At the ſame time we have reaſon to believe, that the angels, ſent to be miniſtering ſpirits to the heirs of ſalvation, will afford us every degree of help in their power, when we are called to enter into the world of ſpirits. If Lazarus was carried by angels to the Paradiſe of God, have we not reaſon to hope, that the Lord will confer the ſame mercy on us, when we are brought into a ſimilar ſtate? If good angels watch around the juſt man's bed, have we not reaſon to believe, the fiends of darkneſs are near to dying ſinners? Perhaps the very ſpirits that have followed them all their days, and have drawn them, by their ſnares, into a thouſand evils. Our adverſary, the devil, goes about as a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour. He leads ſinners captive at his pleaſure. Millions of infernal ſpirits may be daily employed in tempting the children of men to violate the laws of God. It is their buſineſs to lay ſnares for our ſouls. With unwearied diligence they ſeek our ruin. By night and by day, they are engaged to lead tranſgreſſors in the downward road to deſtruction. If they have been ſucceſsful in tempting through life, is it reaſonable to ſuppoſe that they will quit their objects in death? Will they not rather watch with eagerneſs, till the ſinner takes his flight from this world? The dying ſinner has no defence from God, to ſcreen him from the influence of thoſe malicious ſpirits. The angels of God have

no commiſſion to ſecure him from the rage and malice of the devil. Left in a ſtate of wretchedneſs, without the leaſt defence from above, the ſinner muſt of neceſſity fall a victim to his tempters, and be dragged by them to the regions of deſpair. They will probably ſeize the departing wretch, and force him to the horrible pit, where deſtruction and miſery are manifeſt on every ſide.

8. The ſpirits of juſt men, made perfect, will be happy till the morning of the reſurrection. The ſcriptures inform us, that they enter into the joy of their Lord. They are freed from every thing that could diſquiet and make them unhappy. They are admitted into ſuch a ſtate of nearneſs to God, as enables them to triumph continually in his preſence. Several paſſages in the word of God inſinuate, that their bliſs is not ſo complete as it will be, when their body is raiſed from the tomb. That text, in the book of Revelation, which ſpeaks of the ſouls of the bleſſed groaning under the altar, till the redemption of their bodies, inſinuates, that they are not in the ſtate which they will be raiſed to, after the Lord Jeſus Chriſt comes to judge the world in righteouſneſs. If they are not ſo completely bleſſed as they will be, when the final judgment is paſſed, we have reaſon to believe, that nothing in the leaſt diſquiets or makes them unhappy, in that glorious place, to which they are taken. According to their capacities they are filled with the communicable fulneſs of God. They are bleſſed with ſuch glorious communications of the divine preſence, that they conſtantly exult in his mercy. It is probable, new diſcoveries of the glory of God are communicated, and they keep increaſing in holineſs and conformity to their living head continually. We have reaſon to affirm, that all ſorrow and ſighing is removed from them. They are happy in the enjoyment of what eye hath not ſeen, ear heard, nor can it enter into the mind of man to conceive, what God has laid up for them, in that celeſtial place. The ungodly are not ſo. The place of torment, to which they are conſigned; the awakenings of their own conſciences will make them wretched beyond deſcription; the regions of darkneſs and deſpair to which they are taken; the company that will ſurround them; the upbraiding and inſult of thoſe that were their companions in wickedneſs; the torment and miſery inflicted by thoſe who were their tempters; and the wrath of God revealed

from

from heaven to all that are in that wretched place, will cauſe them to experience extreme pain and miſery for ever and ever. The agony of their mind, together with the actual puniſhment inflicted, will make them more miſerable than it is poſſible for an angel to deſcribe. When they look forward to the day of judgment, and conſider all the additional evils they will have to endure, their diſtreſs is increaſed by anticipation. They conſider that their body will be raiſed from the grave, both ſpiritual and immortal, and that their wretched ſpirit will be obliged to re-animate it again. They feel a thouſand pangs in conſidering the awful ſtate in which they will be plunged, after the final judgment. What they endure in the world of ſeparate ſpirits, is only like a few drops before the ſhower. The anxiety of mind they experience from what they already ſuffer, together with the horrible dread that oppreſſes them in the proſpect that opens to their view, is of ſuch a nature, that we cannot ſtretch our imagination to conceive a thouſandth part of what they endure.

9. In the day when the trumpet ſhall be ſounded, and the dead raiſed ſmall and great, the followers of the Lord Jeſus will triumph in the God of their ſalvation. Thoſe that have been ſleeping in their graves for a number of ages, will riſe in a moment, to meet the Prince of Life and Glory. And thoſe that are then alive will be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and be caught up to the right hand of their glorious Immanuel. He will make a diſtinction between the righteous and the wicked. His own followers ſhall ſtand with boldneſs and rejoicing at his right-hand. They will exult in his mercy and love. The Judge himſelf being their friend, they will be confident in his preſence, and rejoice in his ſalvation. He will look with approbation upon them. He will tell what they have done in his name, and for his ſake. He will finiſh by pronouncing before aſſembled worlds, "Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But when the trumpet ſhall ſound through all nations, the ungodly ſhall riſe to ſhame and confuſion of face. They ſhall feel the horrible dread to overwhelm them, which they have ſo long feared. They will tremble at the proſpect of appearing before the Lord Jeſus, in their ſins and in their blood. They will cry out, "Rocks, fall on us, mountains, hide us,

from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb : for the great day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand." Being dragged to the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, they muſt appear at his left hand, and hear him declare, " Go, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."—This awful ſentence will be proclaimed before all nations, and will be attended with awful circumſtances to thoſe that are ſubject to its influence.

10. The righteous ſhall be taken to the heaven of heavens, to reign with God in glory for ever. They ſhall be placed in their proper manſions, and be completely happy in body and ſpirit, through the ages of eternity.—God will lead them to living fountains of water, and all tears ſhall be wiped from their eyes. They ſhall join the redeemed from every nation under heaven, to ſing the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb. They will ever preſent their crowns before the great Jehovah, crying out, " Worthy is the Lamb that hath loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his blood, to receive honour and riches, bleſſing and praiſe for ever and ever." But the wicked ſhall be driven away in their wickedneſs, and in body and ſpirit, ſhall be tormented day and night, in the preſence of God and in the preſence of the holy angels. They will have to endure the pains of the ſecond death. Their miſery will be complete. They will have no reſt for ever, but groan beneath their guilt and puniſhment, world without end.

Let us conclude by a few remarks :

The Lord Jehovah, does not will our death. He waits to be gracious to our ſouls. If we turn to him with all our heart, he will have mercy upon us, and abundantly pardon. He will make his goodneſs to paſs before us, and his truth ſhall be a ſhield to our ſouls. As a father pitieth his children, and provides for them every thing that is neceſſary, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

If we make it the buſineſs of our life to ſecure an intereſt in the Lord Jeſus, God will rejoice to do us good. He will take pleaſure in ſupplying all our wants. He will on all occaſions bleſs and comfort our ſouls. He will change us into his own image, from glory to glory. We ſhall be guided by his counſel through all the difficulties of life, and he will ſupport us in death, and raiſe us to a place

at

at his own right hand. We ſhall have every bleſſing we need in our paſſage through life; every neceſſary ſupport in the valley of the ſhadow of death; every bleſſing we are capable of receiving in the world of ſeparate ſpirits will be imparted; in the day of judgment God will own us for his followers, and pronounce us bleſſed; and will reward us n his kingdom through the countleſs ages of a vaſt eternity.

Should any refuſe to turn to the Lord while he is wating to be gracious, and harden themſelves againſt the voice of his word, they will have to endure all that is threatened in the ſcriptures. The Lord will avenge himſelf of his adverſaries. He will cauſe all the vials of his wrath to be poured upon them, and they ſhall endure "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh," according to the threatenings of the ſcriptures. They ſhall be baniſhed from the preſence of God, and the glory of his power for ever.

May the Lord Jehovah have mercy upon us all, and grant us his ſalvation! May he help us by his Spirit to renounce whatever is contrary to his bleſſed will, that we may have refuge in Chriſt, and be happy in his love! May he bleſs us with that faith which works by love, and purifies the heart, that we may be bold in the approach of death, and ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation! May we be able to witneſs a good confeſſion, that God may be glorified in us, whether it be by life or by death; and that we all may be glorified with him through the ages of ages, to adore redeeming love, and be completely happy in that celeſtial kingdom, which cannot be moved! God grant us theſe mercies, and to him ſhall be aſcribed all the praiſe, eternally! Amen.

END OF THE THIRD SERMON.

The following Extracts will be acceptable to all that love the Religion of Jeſus. They are ſuitable to the ſubjects we have been conſidering.

EXTRACTS

From letters ſent to a friend, on the loſs of a beloved Boy, who was killed, with many others, by the fall of a building, on the 13th February, 1796.

"UPON this awful, melancholy occaſion, I freely mingle a tear with your's. Reaſon and ſcripture, nature and God, forbid us not to mourn on ſuch occaſions. Only let us not grieve *immoderately*. It is granted, he was a moſt deſirable and promiſing youth, and his death very ſudden; but can it be doubted that his ſudden death was not udden glory? Then let us moderate our ſorrow: nay, I had almoſt ſaid, let us rejoice together, that the dear boy is removed from a world of ſin and ſorrow, into a world where neither can enter.

You are now called upon to prove the reality of your religious principles. The Lord is now trying you in a very tender point, and expects ſubmiſſion from you. Remember it is the Lord that has done it: he knows what is beſt for you. He has only taken one out of many. Oh! provoke him not by immoderate ſorrow, leſt he ſtrike again and again. May he give you power to believe that what he does, or permits to be done, is the very beſt for you! And may you feel ſuch a ſweet reſignation to his will herein, that with pious Job you may ſay, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, but ſtill bleſſed be his name!" May the God of love ſupport and comfort you both, that you may ſtrive to comfort each other!—— And may you both come out of the furnace like gold well purified!"

FEB. 15, 1796.

A ſecond letter from the ſame perſon:——"You are ſtill in the vale of affliction, ſorrowing for the loſs of your dear child. Yet I hope by this time the pungency of your ſorrow

ſorrow is abated, and you now begin to ſee the hand of an all-wiſe God in that awful diſpenſation of providence. Indeed while we look at ſecond cauſes only, our minds will be continually diſtreſſed, and will our ſorrow be alleviated. We ſhall ſtill grope in the dark, and remain comfortleſs. But is there not a way whereby we may be delivered from the gloomy abyſs? Surely there is! Bleſſed be God for the revelation of his will to man, by his beloved Son. We are there told, that *the very hairs of our head are all numbered;* and that *not a ſparrow falls to the ground without his notice,* or permiſſion. Now, my dear friends, believe this gracious declaration of God with your heart, and you will find a degree of bleſſed reſignation to his will, and divine comfort to ariſe in your ſoul.

" I have been reading Mr. Law's Serious Call. I ſhall extract a paſſage from it, for your attentive peruſal: " We are as ſure that nothing happens by chance, as that the world itſelf was not made by chance. We are certain that all things happen, and work together for good, as that God is goodneſs itſelf. So that a man has as much reaſon to *will* every thing that happens to him, becauſe God *wills* it, as to think that is wiſeſt, which is directed by infinite wiſdom. Now this is not cheating or ſoothing ourſelves into any falſe content, or imaginary happineſs; but is a ſatisfaction grounded upon as great a certainty, as the being and attributes of God. For if we are right in believing God to act over us with infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, we cannot carry our notions of conformity and reſignation to the divine will too high: nor can we ever be deceived by thinking that to be beſt for us, which God has brought upon us. There is nothing that ſo powerfully governs the heart, as a true ſenſe of God's preſence; and nothing can keep us conſtantly under ſo lively a ſenſe of the preſence of God, as this holy reſignation, which attributes every thing to him, and receives every thing as from him." I would recommend the whole chapter to your ſerious conſideration.

" Many of the diſpenſations of God's providence toward his creatures in this world, are an unfathomable deep. But when the great drama ſhall be unravelled, what we now call misfortunes, evil accidents, or what elſe, ſhall then be proved to have been bleſſings in diſguiſe, and intended to promote our beſt intereſt. Happy will it be for thoſe in that day, who ſhall be found to have received and improved them,

them, according to the intention of God in permitting them to befall us! I hope my next intelligence from —— will inform me that you not only acquieſce, but rejoice in the will of God toward you."

MARCH 13, 1796.

From another friend:—"I have felt and do feel moſt ſenſibly for your heavy affliction. My ſoul has been engaged much in prayer for you. I truſt the Lord has ſupported you, and that you can juſtify the ways of providence in ſaying, "*He has done all things well!*" He has a right to take his creatures to himſelf by what means his infinite and unerring wiſdom ſees good. We have been tried in a ſimilar way. I thought, was the Lord pleaſed to take our boy by the common death of his creatures, I could bear it better, but he has given me to ſee, that he is the Sovereign of the World, and as good as he is great. Therefore I am willing that he ſhould do as ſeemeth him good. I hope I am now willing he ſhould go to heaven God's way.

When we heard of your very great affliction, alas! little did we then know that we ſhould have a fellow-feeling with you, not in theory only, but in a ſimilar way! What can we ſay to theſe things? We muſt hold our peace, and hide ourſelves in the duſt. The Lord gave. They were his property, and he had a right to take them from us, in any manner his unerring wiſdom pleaſed. We may mourn, but muſt not murmur. Faith ſays, "He does all things well." Indeed the ſtroke was ſevere; but although he has taken one from you, and one from me, yet he has not taken *all*, as he did from Job, a greater character. Our dear boy preſents himſelf with his lovely countenance, and childiſh prattle, but we put him away; and in this would fain learn the art of forgetfulneſs. But I will quit this painful ſubject, as it only tears open the wounds, and makes them bleed afreſh, which is not forgetfulneſs, but painful memory.

FEB. and MARCH, 1796.

Another friend writes:—"I am exceedingly ſorry to hear of that moſt diſtreſſing trial, which the Lord has permitted to come upon you. But what ſhall we ſay to theſe things? *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* He, we well know, is infinitely wiſe in all his ways. He has a right to reſume his gifts

gifts in what way he thinks proper, and therefore on ſuch diſtreſſing occaſions, we can only ſay, *I was dumb, becauſe thou didſt it.* It becomes us on every occaſion patiently to ſubmit to whatever we may meet with in the courſe of providence. No doubt the Lord hath a wiſe and gracious deſign, hath ſome bleſſed end to ſerve in ſuffering you to be ſo ſeverely exerciſed. But perhaps it may be ſaid to you, *what I do thou knoweſt not how, but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* I hope that our gracious Lord, whoſe permiſſive hand is in the rod, will lay his everlaſting arms beneath you, and mercifully ſupport and comfort under the painful diſpenſation. He ſurely will give ſuffering grace for ſuffering times, and you ſhall witneſs the truth of that word, my grace is ſufficient for thee.

I was glad to hear that your dear boy was careful to go to prayer before he went out of the houſe. Here is ground for comfort. May you not ſee through this dark cloud the hand of a kind and gracious God, cutting ſhort his work in righteouſneſs, and taking your dear child to his throne? Have you not good reaſon to believe that he has joined the ſhining hoſts above, and is this moment ſinging praiſes to God and the Lamb? Read the 3d of Mrs. Rowe's Letters from the Dead to the Living.

" Perhaps infinite wiſdom foreſaw, that either ſome very diſtreſſing trial awaited this child, or that had he lived long in the world, he might have been betrayed into ſome dreadful evil, or being ready for that happy world, the grand purpoſes of life, with reſpect to him were all anſwered, and when this is the caſe, it is nothing worth ſpeaking of, whether our days upon earth are many or few. I cannot help ſaying, Oh, happy! happy! highly favoured boy! who haſt eſcaped this troubleſome world, and far from all danger, art everlaſtingly happy in the full enjoyment of God! I well know that no affliction for the preſent is joyous. I can eaſily perceive that painful reflections will ſteal upon you, except you are receiving continual help from God. But he is always near, always ready to help, and you will know that fervent prayer will reach his ear, and faith will bring you all the help you want.

" Perhaps this lovely boy may now to the end of your days, be appointed of God as your guardian angel, and may

do you ten thouſand kind offices throughout the whole of your life: And may alſo be the firſt happy ſpirit, who may attend you in your dying moments, and may alſo conduct you to your Father's houſe above. Then, oh! then, my friends ſhall ſee the reaſon, why they were ſuffered to bear ſo heavy a ſtroke, and ſuffer ſo deep an affliction."

FEB. 23, 1796.

FINIS.